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**Family responsibilities, obligations, and commitment in the Seychelles**

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## **Abstract**

Drawing on a small-scale qualitative study, this thesis examines family relations in post-colonial Seychelles. The Seychelles is considered a post-colonial society because it used to be a colony. The aim of this qualitative research, using an interpretive epistemology, is to explore family responsibilities, obligations, and commitment in the Seychelles, and how this varies for different generations and genders. Semi-structured interviews and vignettes were used to gather data from forty participants who consented to take part in the research. The analysis of the data revealed that there are different types of family structures and they are in flux. Post-colonial societies have certain common characteristics and the analysis of the data revealed that the racial, power and gender characteristics common to such societies can be found in the Seychellois Creole family. The analysis revealed that gender is more important than the other characteristics which post-colonial writers have written about and that several family practices are considered as gendered practices. This include the care of the elderly. The analysis also revealed that there are certain family responsibilities that are considered more important than others which include the care of children, the sick and the elderly, and helping each other. The findings showed that obligations within family relationships are not necessarily negotiated – there is more of an expectation. The findings also revealed that commitment is developed through the idea of reciprocity and commitment is then displayed through the support that exists between family members and through intergenerational solidarity – where care of the elderly is provided, usually by the adult daughter.

This thesis contributes to discourses about family life, obligations, duties, commitment, generation, racism, gender, care, and post-colonialism. In its novelty, it brings new knowledge to family relationships on small post-colonial island states and acts as an impetus for future sociological research.

Key words: family, responsibilities, obligations, duties, commitment, the Seychelles, gender, care, post-colonialism.

## **Dedication**

Dedicated to my beloved grandmother, Mum, Theresine Gonzalves, (05 November 1928-12 April 2015). I thank you for all those years of support and the faith you had in my achievements. I lost myself for a while when you left, but I found my way again, like you taught me how to. Thank you for being there when I was growing up, for loving me. I am glad that I was able to reciprocate and fulfil my duties towards you. Those are years I will cherish forever. I will never forget you. Tida, your baby girl loves you, always.

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### List of Acronyms

DIY	Do It Yourself
GBV	Gender Based Violence
MSACDS	Ministry of Social Affairs, Community Development and Sports
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NYS	National Youth Service
OF	Older Female
OM	Older Male
SBC	Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation
SGDI	Southern Africa Gender and Development Index
SIFCO	Seychelles Interfaith Council
SPPF	Seychelles People's Progressive Front
SPUP	Seychelles People's United Party
SSF	Social Security Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
YF	Young Female
YM	Young Male

## Maps

Map showing location of Seychelles 17

Map of Seychelles 18

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **Introduction**

The Seychelles is a small island country which has undergone substantial social and economic changes over the past forty years, though there is limited literature about these changes (Campling, *et al.*, 2011; Pardiwalla, 2009). The cause behind the social changes are both internal and external – independence from being a colony of Great Britain, a coup resulting in Seychelles becoming a one-party socialist state, tourism development, political shifts from dictatorship to democracy, an economic recession, globalisation, ageing of the population and more recently the opposition having a majority of seats in the National Assembly. An institution which has felt the impact of these changes is the Seychellois family.

This thesis explores the relationships between family members in adulthood such as parents and children, siblings, in fact anyone who is considered as ‘family’ in a post-colonial island state. Family life has long been a political feeding ground (Gillies, 2007: 2); been used as an effective political tool (Sommerville, 2000: 133) and is a key social institution that has become a contested site of political and moral discourse (Hunt, 2005: 139).

The universality of family in the Seychelles is inscribed into legislation. In the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles there is a Constitutional law for the family, advocating that:



‘The State recognises that the family is the natural and fundamental element of society and the right of everyone to form a family and undertakes to promote the legal, economic and social protection of the family’ (Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles, 1992: 35).

The family has been given more significance as President Danny Faure declared in his State of Address, in February 2017, that a new ministry would be formed, the Ministry of Family Affairs. The President started his address on this note:

“To understand the state of our nation, it is important that we understand the state of our families, our communities, our society, and our democracy.

Let us start with the family. Today, our families are facing multiple social problems directly linked to housing issues and social ills.

Families form the foundation of our society, and we must go towards the family unit to address our challenges. We need to return to good moral and spiritual values early on so that our children have a much stronger foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the National Assembly that after having listened to them, and discussions that I have had with Civil Society and SIFCO, I have decided that as from the 15<sup>th</sup> of March, there will be a new Ministry, called the Ministry of Family Affairs” (President Danny Faure, 14 February 2017).

The new Minister for Family Affairs, Mrs Jeanne Simeon, was sworn into office during a ceremony at State House before the President of the Republic, Mr Danny Faure in April 2017 (State House, 2017).

A political and social concern about family in Seychelles is the assumption that the family is in decline. For example, Minister Meriton (who is currently the vice-president) stated whilst he was occupying the position of Minister for Social Affairs, Community Development and Sports, which used to be the ministry responsible for family affairs such as the family tribunal, that “there seems to be a weakening of many of our traditional family networks of support” (Seychelles Nation, 2014). This assumption of family decline resonates with public discourses about the family throughout Western societies. Yet despite this assumption there has been no empirical evidence on how or why family life might be changing in the Seychelles.

## **Rationale**

The purpose of this project is to establish how family responsibilities, obligations and commitments are enacted in the Seychelles and how this varies for different generations and genders. I am not capturing social change over time as there is no previous research or data to compare to. I wish to look at the different understandings of family obligations of the different generations and genders. The concepts of family responsibilities, duties and obligations will be understood through the framework of ‘family practices’ in a post-colonial context. It is not to respond to a policy lacuna *per se*, however findings from the project can guide policymakers about the ways in which family relationships can be supported.

## **Policy implications**

Campling *et al.*, argued that there have not been sufficient studies devoted to the social issues faced by small island states like the Seychelles (2011: x, 98,102). As pointed

out by Pardiwalla (2008 in Campling *et al.*, 2011: 91), very limited sociological research has been undertaken in gender relations and little reliable data is available. This makes it difficult to develop a clear understanding of the issues involved or even to open up debate on perceived stereotyped attitudes and perceptions related to gender and the family (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 91) and in particular, there is virtually no comparative research on social policy issues or how social policies affect economic development (Campling *et al.*, 2011: x). It was only recently that a family policy has been launched as stated by Ms Bonne, the Principal Secretary of the newly formed Family Department:

“we have recently launched a family policy and we are working on an ageing policy. Our engagement remains to provide free education, free health care service, among others” (Laurence and Bonnelame, 2017).

#### The development of the welfare structure

After taking power on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1977, the Seychelles People’s Progressive Front (SPPF) led by President France Albert Rene embarked on a programme of socialist-orientated development (Campling and Rosalie, 2006: 119). The core stated SPPF objectives were to create ‘a progressive social order to guarantee work, food, and shelter for all and the fullest development of human resources both collectively and individually’ (SPPF, 1990, p. 7 in Campling and Rosalie, 2006). Thus, the government provides free and equal access to education and health care for all (Shillington, 2009: 113). One way to achieve this was the abolition of all private schools and private clinics (Campling *et al.*, 2011; Shillington, 2009). The government also institutionalised a one-party state, removed civil and political freedoms, and ruled virtually unchallenged until the return of liberal democracy in 1993 (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 4).

Shillington argued that the prime focus of President's Rene's political philosophy was the welfare of the poor, largely black, Creole-speaking Seychellois majority (2009: 154). To achieve this, from January 1978 all schools were nationalised, all privately-owned schools were brought into the government system and school fees were abolished (Shillington, 2009: 157). Shillington (2009) argued that the provision of free school meals for all would be a good opportunity for all children regardless of their background and age to socialise together. According to Shillington the free school meal also would help to break down barriers of class and would undermine the 'snobbish elitism of the better off' (2009: 159).

In their work on specifically the Seychelles and its policies Campling *et al.*, (2011) note the importance of ideology and domestic politics in determining national policy agendas for social development. The government created the Social Security Fund (SSF) by decree in 1979 (Campling *et al.*, 2011). The core rationale behind the SSF was the one-party state's ambition to ensure that everybody in Seychelles benefited from development, rather than just the few and thus this universal insurance mechanism clearly fitted the stated socialist ideals of the new government (Campling *et al.*, 2011). The SSF would collect contributions from workers and employees and use the revenue to assist those who were not in employment (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 78). In 1987, the Social Security Act was adopted, which formalised the role of the SSF and it was to provide a variety of benefits for citizens who had reached retirement age, had long-term illnesses, suffered from disabilities, were unemployed or needed assistance (Social Security Act, 1987, Part III in Campling *et al.*, 2011: 79). In addition, millions of rupees were invested in more programmes, which because of their timing and targeting (they were often discretionary in nature), have led some commentators to argue that they were geared towards achieving electoral success (Campling

*et al.*, 2011: 80). According to Campling *et al.*, supporters of the main political party which runs the government are usually the recipients of these welfare benefits (2011: 80-82).

The European Commission has argued that the Seychelles' vast level of debt build-up was predominantly due to government welfare priorities that have 'proved to be more than the economy could really afford' (European Commission, 2002, p. 2 in Campling and Rosalie, 2006: 121). Furthermore, these policies would prove to be politically very difficult to retract and were often subject to abuse (Campling *et al.*, 2011). Prominent examples of abuse were the Home Care Programme, launched in 1987 for the elderly and gradually extended to the chronically ill, bedridden and severely mentally and/or physically disabled, which resulted in ineligible claimants benefiting (Campling *et al.*, 2011). By 2003, over 40 per cent of participants in these schemes were young women aged between 15 and 30 who were deemed to be sufficiently young to be learning employable skills and moved to unemployment relief or youth training schemes (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2003: 7–21 in Campling *et al.*, 2011). Indirect and discretionary payments consistently accounted for nearly half the expenditure of the SSF throughout the period 1993–2006 (Social Security Fund, various years), which led to accusations that they were used as a form of political patronage for those who supported the SPPF government (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 80). It must be noted that even though there is both a Social Security and Welfare Act (available on Agency for Social Protection Act, 2011; Social Welfare Agency Act, 2008) which clearly stipulates that those entitled should be supported anecdotal evidence suggests that this is not always the case. Anecdotes suggest that overt opposition supporters were at times, unable to gain access to such benefits even if they were entitled. This was because they were supporters of the opposition. Anecdotes further suggest that at times, covert opposition supporters have to pretend to be supporters of the government in order to be able to get access to such benefits.

Campling *et al.*, (2011) argue that the policy implications of maintaining a welfare system which could be considered as generous, are complex, highly political and importantly, they include the fact that, often, economic decisions were being made by the SPPF so as to keep it in power (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 94). The limitations on data collection and analysis have already been acknowledged as a priority area (Ministry of Finance, 2010: 134; UNDP, 2010 in Campling *et al.*, 2011); this should be supplemented as argued by Campling *et al.*, by careful qualitative study so that social relationships in Seychelles can be better understood in all their complexity (2011: 104).

### **Research aim and the research questions**

The primary aim of this research is to explore family responsibilities, obligations, and commitment in the Seychelles. In order to engage with this, I set three main research questions which were to explore:

- What do people in the Seychelles identify as appropriate family responsibilities, duties and obligations?
- How are these obligations negotiated within family relationships?
- How is commitment developed and displayed by men and women and by younger and older adults?

To answer these research questions, my research draws heavily on David Morgan's (1999) work on family practices. The work of Finch and Mason (1993) on family obligations has proven helpful as well. This will be contextualised within a post-colonial setting.

### **Structure of the thesis**

To provide a deeper consideration of the theoretical and conceptual context of the study, the two following chapters, Chapter Two and Chapter Three focus on the literature review. Chapter Two focuses on the Seychelles, discussing firstly its geography and history. Its geography shows its location and its small size. Its history is very important as it informs the post-colonial setting of the Seychellois society. The Seychelles is described as a post-colonial society because it was once colonised and as a post-colonial society it has distinct racial, gender and power characteristics. As Seychellois are Creole, there is a discussion of the Creole family especially with regards to its matrifocality, which is argued to be a result of colonisation. This chapter reveals that there is a gap in the literature about the role of women as carers in post-colonial island state societies. In fact, most post-colonial literature focuses on larger societies like in Africa, the Americas and West Indies. Islands like the Seychelles are mostly ignored. The characteristics of post-colonial societies which include racial, power and gender issues are discussed as they are argued to be the products of slavery and colonisation. This is followed by a discussion of feminist post-colonial analysis and what it says about gender and family in other post-colonial contexts beyond the Seychelles.

Chapter Three focuses on the sociology of the family in broad terms. This chapter is significant as there is a lack of family sociology in the Seychelles so generic literature will be reviewed especially from British sociologists, such as Morgan (1999) and Finch and Mason (1993). The first sections focus on the things that family do, which are essentially

family practices. Family practices include care and support. Subsequent sections will focus on family values which include family responsibilities, duties and obligations, reciprocity, commitment, morality and ambivalence. These concepts will be applied to the empirical chapters which will be discussed in the post-colonial Seychelles context. This chapter shows that one of the key strengths of family practices is that it addresses gender issues which are not addressed adequately by post-colonial writers but that there are limitations around the idea of family practices. These include the unexpected finding of the complexity of 'race' and ethnicity in the family which will be discussed in the first empirical chapter in the section on racial issues. Family practices fail to address these complexities and when discussing family practices in a post-colonial setting it is revealed how skin tone is important and how it impacts family relationships. All this will be discussed in the first empirical chapter.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology adopted in this research. It focuses firstly on the aim of qualitative research as my research is qualitative. The next section focuses on research methods, which is comprised of the research design, sampling, characteristics of the sample, the recruitment process, the use of semi-structured interviews and vignettes. This section also focuses on the data collection, transcription and translation, and the analysis of the data. Considering I use some anecdotes in my empirical chapters, there is a discussion of the use of anecdotes in research. This is followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations of anonymity, confidentiality and consent. As I am considered as an insider the chapter then focuses on what is meant to be an insider, before ending with a discussion of the problem with studying families.

Chapter Five is the first of three empirical chapters. As the project is novel for the Seychelles, family structures are first described, followed by a discussion of the absent father phenomenon which is seen to be pertinent to the Seychellois Creole family. The subsequent



section focuses on the Seychellois family itself and how it is characterized by distinctive racial, power and gender issues. These issues are discussed in a post-colonial setting. This section reveals that in post-colonial Seychelles, which is an island state – gender is more important than the other topics which post-colonial writers have written about. Gender issues include the sexual division of labour within the home, chores that have been classified as ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ and boys being excused from household chores. This empirical chapter then focuses on family responsibilities. These responsibilities are considered as values and they include; the care of children and the care of the elderly and the sick. These are responsibilities that the participants value but argue are not happening as they would have wanted them to. The following section focuses on the negotiation of obligation. It shows that obligations are not always negotiated and that usually there is a person who is in control where negotiations are concerned, and this person is usually a woman.

Chapter Six is the second empirical chapter and its focus is on doing family in the Seychelles. These are family activities and are referred to as family practices by Morgan (1999). These family practices are considered in a post-colonial setting. Family practices that are being practiced by the participants include spending Sunday with key family members; family visits; seeing family members which are either done daily or regularly; and providing support and help. Support is mainly between parents and children. Help is from parents to their independent children. Such help is either financial, or is given to a pregnant daughter, or to do with childcare. Help is also given because it is a question of the participant’s faith. The chapter’s last section discusses family rituals. Some of these rituals have become family practices. Most of them have religious implications.

Chapter Seven is the final empirical chapter and it focuses on the central themes of commitment and care. The first section focuses on the development of commitment which

happens through the idea of reciprocity. To find out whether being reciprocal is still a powerful idea at the normative level a vignette was used, and its results are discussed. The subsequent section focuses on the display of commitment. This is done through the care of the elderly and intergenerational solidarity. To perceive how participants acknowledge that there is a notion of familial responsibility another vignette was administered, and its findings are also discussed. Before concluding this chapter, there is a section on ambivalence and how the care of the elderly can lead to conflict. Two case studies are used to illustrate intragenerational conflict created by the care of two elderly mothers.

This thesis completes with a conclusion which appraises the research aim, objectives and design. This is followed by a summary of the findings of the research. It also discusses what the findings have contributed to the sociology of the family and to the theory of post-colonialism. It then discusses certain policy implications the research has. The conclusion offers considerations for further research in this field. It finishes with noting how this research has moved beyond my initial research questions and I was not limited by them.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Post-colonialism in the Seychelles**

#### **Introduction**

This literature chapter introduces post-colonialism in the Seychelles. To develop a sociological account of the family in the Seychelles the research interrogates notions of family responsibility in a post-colonial context. Here, the history of slavery and the way this has impacted upon family life in the Seychelles is considered. Scarr argues that slave and post-slavery societies of the Americas and West Indies are often very well studied historically – those of the Indian Ocean such as Mauritius, particularly in the Seychelles, are very much less so (Scarr, 2000: v). Significant material from the Seychelles context is drawn from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Community Development and Sports (MSACDS) because there is a general lack of resources in the Seychelles. There is however some use of material from Western sociologists because of this lack of relevant literature. This is mostly the case with gender issues which is one of the three characteristics of post-colonised people and yet literature about gender is limited in the Seychelles context. When post-colonial writers do focus on the topic of gender they make reference to the black woman but the issues the black women in post-colonial societies go through are not relevant to the Seychellois women as it will be seen in the empirical chapters. There is also a discussion on feminist post-colonial analysis and how gender and the family in other post-colonial contexts compare and contrast to the Seychelles.

This review takes into consideration the experience of the Seychelles during both colonial and post-colonial periods and the relevance of writings on post-colonialism to the

Seychelles context. The work of Fanon has proven to be more relevant than other writers of post-colonialism as he focused on Algeria which is part of Africa (as is the Seychelles), and when reviewing his work, it can be argued that several of his arguments on post-colonialism fitted the Seychelles post-colonial context. As the Seychelles is an island state and has been identified to be Creole a review of the Creole family in the Caribbean, which is similar to those in the Seychelles is also done. So, firstly I will focus on the geography and history of the Seychelles.

### **The Seychelles – geography and history**

The Seychelles has been identified as being unique because it consists of granite islands as well as coralline islands (Worldmark Encyclopedia of Nations, 2007). It is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean, consisting of an estimated 115 islands. The second-smallest country in Africa, the Seychelles has an area of 455 square kilometres, of which Mahé, the principal island, comprises 144 square kilometres. The capital city, Victoria, is located on the island of Mahé (Worldmark Encyclopedia of Nations, 2007). Victoria was officially given its name in 1841, by the Civil Commissioner, Mylius, in honour of Queen Victoria (McAteer, 2000: 47).

Most of the Seychelles' history has been written by white Western males (for example, Franda, 1982; McAteer, 2000; Scarr, 2000; Shillington, 2009). Its first inhabitants were slave-owners and their slaves (Durup, 2013). It is of significance to the history of the Seychelles that the main granite islands of the group lie almost exactly in the centre of the western Indian Ocean (Shillington, 2009: 1). The military-strategic value of the small islands was important as they could act as points from which shipping and trade routes could be protected and in protecting against the encroachment of rival colonial power (Kothari and

Wilkinson, 2010: 1399). France first laid claim to the uninhabited islands of the Seychelles in 1756, forming a settlement fourteen years later to exploit the islands' timber and tortoises (McAteer, 2000). The inhabitants comprised of fifteen French settlers and seven slaves (Scarr, 2000: 4).

The French settlers and their African slaves grew crops, including spice plants and cotton (McAteer, 2000: xii). However, they did not stay for long on the first island they settled on. They went to settle on Mahé. The main economic activity was the planting and cultivating of cotton 'which serves as a currency for the purchase of estates, schooners and slaves' (Scarr, 2000: 13). The personal lives of the slaves revolved around the straw hut, garden plot and bamboo fish-trap (Scarr, 2000). Their world was likely to be a 'matriarchal' one, where children went with the mother, who was responsible for the household even when it included a man or men (Scarr, 2000: 29). According to Scarr, men did not concern themselves at all about the children they may have out of wedlock nor were they interested in getting married to legitimize a pregnancy (2000: 4).

The slave population increased considerably compared to that of the white masters. It has been suggested that the main reason behind the increase of the slave population was that slaves were not just having sexual relations among each other, but sexual relations were also taking place between masters and female slaves (Scarr, 2000; Shillington, 2009). The low percentage of women among the early white colonists and the total control which an 'owner' exerted over his 'property' allowed for the frequent exploitation of enslaved women. Some women were freed and became concubines, while others were raped (Shillington, 2009: 13). These practices led to the emergence of a mixed-race population. Many, denied recognition by their fathers, remained enslaved (Shillington, 2009: 14). This can be related to Therborn's (2004) argument that the scarcity and the inaccessibility of white women was

compensated for by the prevailing norm and practice, by violence if need be, of the sexual accessibility of black women (Therborn 2004: 35). Indeed, female slaves were defenceless against sadistic behaviour, as well as sexual abuse, something that was probably more common and widespread than existing records indicate (McAteer 2000: 10).

The British rule in the Seychelles started in 1811 but was legally bound by the Treaty of Paris in 1814 (Durup, 2013: 26). So, for about a century (1814-1903) the Seychelles was governed by Britain as a dependency of Mauritius before becoming, in 1903, a separate Crown colony (McAteer, 2000: xii). During that time slavery was abolished, in 1835. Following liberation, the landowners offered such meagre wages that most former slaves refused to work full time on the estates. Following their recent enslaved experience of enforced labour, ten hours a day, six days a week, they preferred now to live a simple unregulated life, even if this was in extreme poverty (Shillington, 2009: 22). They grew much of their own food, and otherwise spent their time fishing, resting, socialising and drinking home-brewed alcohol known as *bacca* (Shillington, 2009: 22).

In 1880 English became an official language alongside French, and English was introduced as a subject in education, but French remained the medium of instruction (Franda, 1982: 34). However, this has changed significantly as today English is the medium of instruction and French is taught as a subject in schools. Political life remained dominated by the Colonial government which co-opted members of the landowning elite and it was not until 1939 that the first political grouping, the Seychelles Taxpayers and Landowners Association was formed to represent the elite and press for further power for them (Campling *et al.*, 2009: 18). The Seychelles remained a Crown colony (from 1903) until its independence in June 1976.

Two significant political events happened recently in the Seychelles. The first one happened in early December 2015. For the first time, the presidential elections went into a second round and the incumbent president won by a small margin of 196 votes. The second event happened in September 2016 when the opposition won a majority for the National Assembly in the parliamentary elections and so, for the first time in 39 years, the opposition is in the majority in the assembly. This has been an eventful and historical time for many Seychellois who feels that there is a need for a change in government.

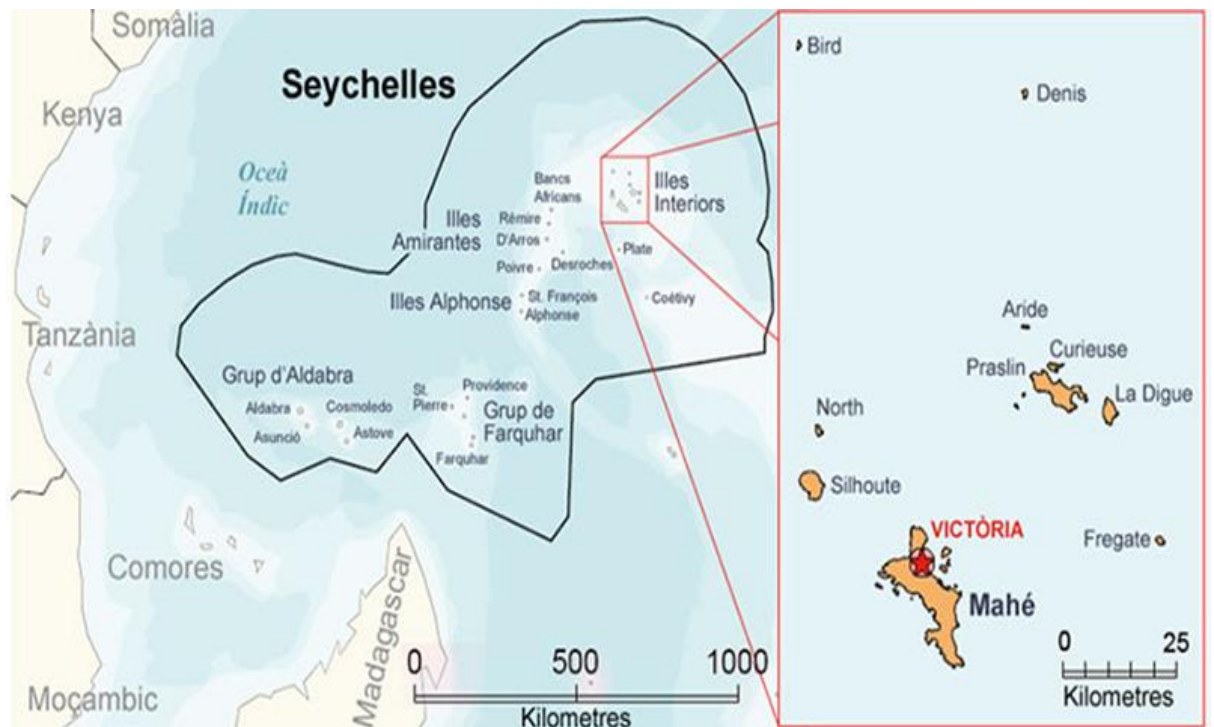
## Map showing location of Seychelles



Seychelles MAP: Population, Facts About Prince William and Kate Middleton's Honeymoon Destination, (Stenovec, 2011).



## Map of Seychelles



Seychelles, (Private Ocean Islands, 2016).

## Creole families

Creolization has been identified as the process of intermixing and cultural change that produces a creole society (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 58). It is referred loosely to those post-colonial societies whose present ethnically or racially mixed populations are a product of European colonization (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 58). For Brathwaite creolization 'is a cultural process' (1971: 11). Seychellois families can be compared to the Creole Caribbean families because the Seychellois people recognize themselves as Creole as well. One of the similarities is the society itself. The Creole society has been referred to as one which 'was the product of unequal encounters and deep interpenetration between, on one hand and a socially significant ruling class of European colonizers and, on the other hand, a socially significant class of ruled non-European' (Therborne, 2004: 34). This is the kind of society the Seychelles was before its independence from Britain in 1976. The English term creole is derived from the Portuguese *Criolulo* (Spanish *criollo*) meaning 'native', via the French *creole*, meaning indigenous (The Free Dictionary, 2003). Creole originally referred to a white (man) of European descent, born and raised in a tropical colony, and later, the meaning was extended to include indigenous natives and others of non-European origin (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998). The term was subsequently applied to certain languages spoken by creoles in and around the Caribbean and in West Africa, and then more generally to other languages of similar type that had arisen in similar circumstances (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998).

Creole societies consisted of slaves and landowners and this is where most of the Creole families originate from (McAteer, 2000; Scarr 2000; Therborne, 2004). Here, male slaves and female slaves lived together as a 'family'. For slaves, marriage was often prohibited, whereas informal mating was strongly encouraged (Therborne, 2004: 35). It has been suggested that slavery itself encouraged impermanence in unions and, on the Seychelles

evidence, may have been responsible for promiscuity from an early age (Scarr, 2000: 29). It can be argued that family life was not encouraged when the slave-household could be divided because the newlywed master's son was going over from Mahé to Praslin (the second biggest island) to develop a habitation (Scarr, 2000). On his departure, he would take a family member with him, usually the father. This eventually led to the formation of matrifocal families.

The term 'matrifocality' or women-centred was first used in reference to societies of poor Blacks, especially the West Indies (González, 1970: 231). González suggested that matrifocality can be of a direct result of conditions imposed upon the slave societies (1970: 231). She argues that there is much variance in its meaning, which includes the general status of women in the society is 'rather good', in other cases in those households in which the woman is the primary *source* of income, and at times there is no resident male in the household (1970: 232). The meaning of matrifocality that I use in my thesis is the one where normally it is expected to find that when members of the extended family are included in the household, these are more likely to be relatives of the mother than of the father and that personal contacts occurred more frequently with mother's kin than with father's kin (1970: 233-234). This will be identified as one of the gendered practices that takes place in Seychelles, as well as other family practices, some of which are direct results of colonialism.

## **Post-colonialism**

Post-colonialism has never been as relevant as it is today (Nayar, 2016: 1). Postcolonial studies emerged at the end of the 1970s (Lazarus, 2011: 1) and interestingly, the Seychelles became a postcolonial society in 1976 after achieving its independence from Great Britain. Childs and Williams refer to post-colonialism as the period that comes after

the end of colonialism (1997: 1) and they describe societies considered as having gone through post-colonialism as ‘those peoples formerly colonized by the West’ (Childs and Williams, 1997: 12). It has also been suggested that it is more helpful to think of post-colonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legalities of colonialism (Loomba, 2005: 16). Analyses of ‘post-colonial’ societies too often work with the sense that colonialism is the only history of these societies (Loomba, 2005: 20). Colonialism did not inscribe itself on a clean slate and it cannot therefore account for everything that exists in postcolonial societies (Loomba, 2005: 21). The Seychelles itself was a clean slate as it was uninhabited. However, the slaves and their masters who settled on the islands brought with them their languages, music, food and culture (Loomba, 2005) creating diversity. This makes it almost impossible to know what the Seychelles’ first culture was because there are no historical accounts of this. Because it was colonized the Seychelles ultimately is now a post-colonial society.

Post-colonialism considers the cultural similarities that have emerged since the end of the colonial period (Sharp, 2009: 7). Ever since the publication of Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) which provided a foundation for postcolonial theory, much has been written over the decades. The warm reception for this theory, especially in the Western countries, as a way to approach the study of formerly colonised cultures and societies, can be seen as one of the reasons for the sustained interest in this field of study – postcolonial theory has been institutionalised in Western academia (Dwivedi and Kich, 2013: 9). Post-colonialism as a theory and a critique emerged from within anti-colonial activism and political movements in Asia, Africa and South America (Nayar, 2010: 1). Post-colonialism invokes ideas of social justice, emancipation, and democracy in order to oppose oppressive structures of racism, discrimination and exploitation (Nayar, 2010). But it also

emphasises the formerly colonised subjects' 'agency' – defined as the ability to affect her/his present conditions and future prospects – in the face of continuing oppression (Nayar, 2010: 4). Post-colonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies – from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 186).

Kothari and Wilkinson argue that there must be understandings of how colonial discourses historically intervened in the physical and social space of former colonies and how they continue to be mobilised in postcolonial contexts (2010: 1396). The Seychelles can be argued to be a post-colonial society as it has been colonized by the West, first France, then Britain. The Seychelles and Mauritius, for instance, were unpopulated until their colonisation, and the populations settled in each did so as a consequence of imperial movements (Kothari and Wilkinson, 2010). The population of the Seychelles, 'currently 85 000, grew from, and continues to consist largely of, the descendants of African slaves and a small landowning British and French elite' (Kothari and Wilkinson, 2010: 1396). It has been argued by post-colonial writers (e.g. Memmi, 1974) that post-colonial societies have distinct racial, gender and power characteristics. The first characteristic of post-colonial Seychelles I will focus on is racial.

### Racial characteristics

Critical Race Theory and Race Studies have fed into post-colonial thought in direct, as well as, in indirect ways (Nayar, 2010: 21). 'Race' is a marker of difference and racial difference marks distinction of language, beliefs, (Nayar, 2010: 22). Even though the Seychelles has been characterised to be a blend of ethnic identities, the complexity of 'race' in this post-colonial society can still be clearly recognised. When referring to 'race' in post-

colonial Seychelles context I am referring to the ‘problem of colour’ which was made by Du Bois when he asserted that ‘the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa and the islands of the sea’ (Du Bois, 1903: xx). As Loomba argues, colour is taken to be the prime signifier of racial identity (2005: 105).

There has been a noticeable growth of interest in the issue of the role of racial ideologies and practices during the colonial period (Back, and Solomos, 2009: 13). The interest in colonialism has helped to highlight complex processes of racial and gender identifications experienced by the colonised during the colonial and postcolonial periods (Back, and Solomos, 2009: 13-14). Brown *et al.* (2003) claim that racism is a permanent fixture in society even though many have argued that overt discrimination no longer exists. In the Seychelles, there is a common saying among Seychellois people which is about the black Creole woman or family wanting some whiteness in her/their life. In Creole, the saying is ‘anmenn lalimyer dan nou salon’ which is translated as ‘bringing some light in our living room’ where ‘light’ here means ‘white’. Fanon’s work reflects this, where he argues that the black woman ‘asks nothing, demands nothing, except a bit of whiteness in her life’ (1952: 42). In his work on the Seychelles, Franda argues that one of the reasons for so many inter-racial marriages and sexual alliances in the Seychelles is an attempt on the part of many Seychellois, and he stresses here, especially Seychellois women, to produce offspring who have a lighter skin colour (1982: 36).

As a result of colonization, ‘the white man becomes the epitome of perfection and the black man seeks to emulate him’ – a ‘white mask’ over his ‘black skin’ (Fanon, 1952, 1967). The black man seeks to escape his blackness, ‘in the man of colour there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence’ (Fanon, 1967:

60). Here, the native takes on Western values, religion, the language and practices of the white colonial and rejects his own traditions (Nayar, 2010: 9). As Franda stated, in colonial Seychelles the upper classes clung tenaciously to their French language and culture and to the Catholic faith and provided a model for the lower classes, 'speaking French, practicing Catholicism and having a light-coloured skin strengthened one's association with the first free settlers and, therefore, all three came to be identifying signs of good pedigree' (1982: 30).

There used to be a saying in the Seychelles when a black woman has children with a white man, she will advise her children to 'avoid slipping back' (Fanon, 1952), and not to have a relationship with a black man/woman. People do not talk openly about this and these are shared only among family members usually in comic form. Lighter skin children born in a black family is usually referred to as 'blan' (white) or 'gri' (brown) depending on how light their skin is and the texture of their hair. It is these children, who when reach adulthood, are advised to 'pa retourn dan sa trou' which is translated to as 'not going back in the hole' which is essentially related to the work of Fanon (1952) where he mentions 'to avoid slipping back'. Here, Fanon argues that 'first of all, there are two such women: the Negress and the mulatto. The first has only one possibility and one concern: to turn white. The second wants not only to turn white but also to avoid slipping back' (1952: 54).

Fanon also wrote about the man of colour and the white woman, 'the Negro who has had a white woman makes himself taboo to his fellows' (1952: 52). Many post-colonial writers tend to focus on the relationship between the black slave woman and the white man. It can be argued that there is not a lot of focus on the white woman and the black man because the colonized woman was the black woman and because of her whiteness the white woman was a colonizer. In the Seychelles, it is more covertly frowned upon when a white woman is

with a black man than when a black woman is with a white man. For example, Franda argues that in the Seychelles there have been cases where families have fallen out because of racial issues, such as in the case of a girl with light skin marrying a man with dark skin, much to the disapproval of the family (1982: 41).

It is important to note that there is, to some extent the normalising of the use of racial slurs, for example referring to a black person as ‘mazanbik’ [related to African] or a brown person as ‘malbar’ [Indian] to the extent that people have accepted using or being called such terms. This can be argued to be a communicative strategy used to escape what are considered to be uncomfortable ‘race’-based exchanges and contributes to those who claim racism no longer plays a critical role within our contemporary society (Diem and Carpenter, 2013: 56-57). For example, during the early political campaigns in the Seychelles, René’s SPUP was not averse to using ‘race’ as a means of picking up support from the black Creole population, and at times SPUP attacks on the government bordered on racism, describing Mancham [first president who was usurped by René in the coup] as ‘a Chinaman’ (Franda, 1982: 61). The old colonial mentality remained, and people defined their identity in terms of ‘race’ (Shillington, 2009: 154).

### The Dependency Complex – Power

Post-colonial writers such as Fanon identify that the state has certain power over the people, particularly over people who was once colonized. This is the ‘the so-called dependency complex of colonized peoples’ (Fanon, 1952: 61), which can be argued to fit within the Seychellois mindset whereby the state has at the disposition of the people, a welfare system, which has been identified as ‘generous’ (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 94). Fanon (1952) argued that the native’s dependency complex was the direct effect (and not the cause)



of colonization. When the white master constantly treats the black man as simply the means of hard labour, the relationship between the two is only one kind: white master-black slave (Nayar, 2010: 9). This dependency complex was an effect of the power that the colonizer had over the colonized.

Drebes argues that certain forms of inequality are generally accepted by most members of society (2016: 114). In this context, if those on welfare decide not to depend on the state they then would end up in poverty (Drebes, 2016). According to postcolonial theory, most, if not all of these differences, have their origin in colonial domination practices, therefore not being existent *per se* but having developed over decades and centuries of suppression (Drebes, 2016: 117). In the case of the Seychelles, according to Campling *et al.*, many people have become dependent on the state's welfare system (2011: 80, 94). Supporters of the main political party which runs the government are usually the recipients (Campling *et al.*, 2011: 80-82). As Memmi asserts 'the colonial relationship which I had tried to define chained the colonizer and the colonized into an implacable dependence, moulded their respective characters and dictated their conduct' (1974: 5). It has been argued by Seychellois who identify themselves covertly as opposition supporters that the government has created this kind of dependence of its people on its welfare system to be able to dictate their behaviour and to maintain the status quo. Families who support the main political party can always turn to the welfare system in times of need, something that overt opposition supporters cannot rely on.

Ashcroft *et al.*, (1998) argue that dependency theory explains the continued impoverishment of colonized 'Third World' countries on the grounds that underdevelopment is not internally generated but a structural condition of global capitalism itself. Such underdeveloped countries are usually formerly colonized states that are prevented, by the forces of global capitalism from independent development (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 67). In the

postcolonial era, the gap between ‘people’ and ‘state’ widened than narrowed (Davidson, 1992). There were national conflicts in the form of executive power between contending groups or individuals among the ‘elites’ which took priority over the interest of most of the inhabitants of these new nation states (Davidson, 1992). This is applicable to the Seychelles, as soon after independence in 1976, there was a coup in 1977 and the Seychelles became a socialist one-party state until 1991. Lazarus posits that leaders came to identify their own maintenance in power as being more important than democratisation, opportunity and equality, and they increasingly used repressive apparatuses of the state to enforce order and to silence or eliminate opposition (2011: 5). The way René came into power through the coup, has created fear in the people of Seychelles. This could be one of the reasons why, unlike other societies who were once colonised, and their people have been vocal about their oppression and would even carry out riots, this hasn’t been the case in the Seychelles. The thought of carrying out a demonstration and being openly critical of the government raises fear in many Seychellois people. This fear has been passed from one generation to the next.

To maintain the status quo the government provides free health care and education for all (Shillington, 2009: 113). This is used by the main political party which currently runs the government, where governmental politicians would claim that if the people vote against the government in power and another government assumes power, the people would lose this right. This is false as this provision is enshrined in the Constitution of Seychelles – that the only way the people would lose access to this right is if they, themselves, vote in a referendum to take that constitutional right away from them as more than 60 percent of the total votes cast is needed to amend this part of the constitution. In fact, the people of Seychelles carried out riots in the colonial times, for example in 1971 (Shillington, 2009: 119), so they were less afraid of the colonial powers than they were of René because ‘any open opposition to the one-party concept could have been portrayed as virtually treasonous’

(Shillington, 2009: 145). The inequalities of a post-slavery society had penetrated deep into the culture and minds of all classes of Seychellois society (Shillington, 2009: 154). René has even threatened his own people to leave the country:

“I, as the president chosen by the people, will ensure that they [those unwilling to help with the construction efforts] are made to get out [of the country] as soon as possible” (in 1981, in Franda, 1982: 68).

Given the introduction of press censorship, a lack of privacy in the mails, the curtailment of judicial freedoms, preventive detention, schools for enforcing political discipline, and forced exile, it is not surprising that an element of fear has been introduced in Seychelles politics (Franda, 1982: 68) and in the Seychellois people generally.

### Gender Characteristics

This section focuses on what will be identified in the empirical chapters as the dominant post-colonial characteristic that persists in the Seychelles. This is gender characteristics. Gender is socially and culturally constructed (Butler, 1999). Nations and nationalism are gendered, in anti-colonial struggles as well as postcolonial nation states (Nayar, 2010: 101). The home, community and tradition become sites of identity, and the woman is the key figure here, as exemplified in the works of Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie and other postcolonial writers (Nayar, 2010: 101). The very idea of ‘nation-as-family’ in post-colonialism is contingent upon particular roles for men and women (Nayar, 2010: 101). Gender themes in post-colonial writing include issues such as identity, the intersection of the discourses of racism, imperialism and sexism, marriage, sexuality, desire and the body, the link between fundamentalism and patriarchy, the role of ‘mothers’, and the

intimate linkage between motherhood and motherland, women and spirituality in post-colonial societies (Nayar, 2010: 102).

The Seychelles, together with Dominica has been placed as the fourth best place among 54 countries of the Commonwealth for a girl child to be born (after New Zealand, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) by a study published by the Royal Commonwealth Society in March 2011 (MSACDS, 2014). The study was based on eight indicators: life expectancy, underweight children, number of years in school, teenage pregnancies, girls' accessing scholarships, political participation, women athletes and pay equality (MSACDS, 2014: 57). In the Seychelles, nationally, the Constitution guarantees gender equality through the Preamble and the Seychellois Charter of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms. All rights, except for Article 30 which addresses the issue of working mothers, listed in the Constitution are applicable to both men and women (The Constitution of Seychelles, 1992). The law makes provision for 'fair and equal wages for work of equal value without distinction (The Constitution of Seychelles, 1994: 36-37), hence there is no gender pay gap. There are no gender restrictions for access to loans and credit, to ownership of land and property, as women are also independent owners and can dispose of their possessions as they so wish (MSACDS, 2014: 26). There are no formal impediments to girls having access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education (MSACDS, 2014). The only ones that exist are gender stereotypes in the Seychellois culture in relation to career choices, where girls are expected to choose careers in health, education, cultural and social fields (MSACDS, 2014). However, this is changing as more girls choose to attend post-secondary institutions such as the Maritime Training Centre (MSACDS, 2014: 30). Poverty in the Seychelles remains feminised, especially for women who are heads of households (MSACDS, 2014: 36). However, no studies have been conducted specifically to study

feminisation of poverty, *per se* (MSACDS, 2014: 77) even if ‘poverty has become a central woman’s issue’ (hooks, 2000: 51).

Loomba argues that colonialism intensified patriarchal oppression, often because native men who were disenfranchised became more tyrannical at home (2005: 142). This is one area where Seychellois women are still being affected – domestic violence and other kinds of violence in general. As bell hooks argued ‘ending male violence against women is a feminist agenda’ (1994: 104). Gender-based violence continues to be a major source of distress and vulnerability for families, especially women and children (MSACDS, 2014). The latter two groups are disproportionately represented in cases of violence reported to various institutions, such as the Family Tribunal or Probation Services or the Police (MSACDS, 2014: 16). However, men also are victims of domestic violence, though not on a large-scale as women (Chiramba, 2016).

However, despite the great strides made by women in Seychelles, national attitudes regarding girls and women tend to place the blame on the victims (MSACDS, 2014). For instance, in the case of the murders of sex workers in recent years, public attitude shows lack of understanding and sympathy for the victims who are seen as having caused their own demise (MSACDS, 2014: 35). In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of young girls and women engaged in street-based prostitution due to a rise in injecting drug use, especially heroin (MSACDS, 2014). At least four sex workers have been murdered in the last three years, with one in early 2014, where the woman and her unborn child were killed (MSACDS, 2014). There is a lack of specialised rehabilitation facilities for girls and women (MSACDS, 2014: 16). The increase in drug addiction especially heroin, places an overwhelming burden placed on mothers, spouses, partners and sisters and there are no facilities catering to the special needs of female drug-dependents (MSACDS, 2014: 57).

Nearly all tasks, such as attending court cases, taking care packages to prison, provision of support, are carried out by women, with the males present in the household preferring to wash their hands off the situation and offering advice such as throwing the addict out of the house (MSACDS, 2014: 37). This reveals that in the Seychelles there is still gender inequality even if it is argued that the constitution ensures that men and women are treated equally – this remains an ideology because it is very different in practice. This will be seen in the empirical chapters where several responsibilities are identified by *both* men and women to be women's responsibilities and diverting from such norms are at times frowned upon, especially by older members of the family.

Pardiwalla, a freelance consultant and trainer of Education and Gender in the Seychelles, argues that several policies and pieces of legislation are in place to promote gender equality and women's empowerment but 'power remains in the hands of the men' (2009: 38-39). She asserts that 'to date there has been very little research on gender in Seychelles schools, apart from two studies that have looked at the differential achievement of boys and girls in primary and secondary schools based on exam results' (Pardiwalla, 2009: 40). Pardiwalla argues that gender as a social construct was not fully understood by everyone: frequent references were made to the biological make-up of men and women to explain behaviours (Pardiwalla, 2009: 47). The consensus was that women were more suitable for the 'caring professions', and those that needed 'patience' (Pardiwalla, 2009: 50). Studies carried out revealed that girls were given a larger proportion of family responsibilities, looking after siblings and doing household chores and boys were expected to tidy their rooms and do 'outside' jobs like sweeping the yard (Pardiwalla, 2009: 50). Pardiwalla also asserts that unfortunately no data on the socio-economic back-ground of students is available at school or national level and issues of class are largely ignored in educational research (2009: 40). It can be argued here, that 'class' has not been given a

definite definition or not incorporated into studies because of the Marxist-socialist regime currently in place. Class has not been identified to be part of the post-colonial culture as the government in place advocates a communist/socialist regime which supposedly did away with the class system created by the British during colonisation.

### Feminist post-colonial analysis

This section focuses on feminism, specifically feminist post-colonial analysis. Post-colonisation theory reveals that the power dimension of race is there, but the power dimension of gender is not there – and post-colonial feminists attempt to bring in the gender dimension. There is this intersection between race and gender, which will be discussed in the analysis chapters, and how this complicates things in the sense that family practices do not carry a feminist agenda. The family practices approach does not engage with feminism even if there is a focus on gendered practices. So, this is where feminist post-colonial analysis comes in. An attempt must be made to ‘map the space of the postcolonial female subject’ (Rajan, 1993: 1) as literature on race has failed to address the way gender processes relate to those of race (Anthias, and Yuval-Davies, 1992: 97). Gender divisions also serve as a central organizing principle of social relations and therefore need to be considered in terms of their connections with race (Anthias, and Yuval-Davies, 1992: 100). It is important to reiterate that while the concepts of class, colonialism, race and ethnicity figure predominantly in studies of settler societies, gender and the distinctive hierarchical and interdependent relations of women from various national, ethnic and racial collectivities have for the most part been neglected (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davies, 1995: 2).

Post-colonial feminist writers call for a close examination of the way the condition of women in post-colonial societies require a different version of feminism (Nayar, 2010).

Post-colonial women writers see the woman as being double colonized – by the European races and by their own men (Nayar, 2010: 102). This feminism might have to be located in the lived experiences of oppressive or indifferent laws, horrifying material conditions of poverty, poor health services, safety and education, economic dependence, patriarchal control over their bodies (Nayar, 2010: 121-2). Lewis and Mills (2003) argue that current feminist postcolonial theory still exerts a pressure on mainstream postcolonial theory in its ‘constant iteration of the necessity to consider gender issues’. This is reiterated by Boehmer (2005) who argues that in mainstream postcolonial studies, gender is still conventionally treated in a tokenistic way, or as subsidiary to the category of race. Essentially male-authored postcolonial theory, however well-intentioned, has since then remained relatively untouched by any serious consideration of gender (Boehmer, 2005: 7; Lewis and Mills, 2003).

Lewis and Mills (2003) further argue that the dynamism that feminism provided for the early development of critical studies in colonialism, race and power has often been overlooked. bell hooks argued that ‘we perpetuate both consciously and unconsciously the very evils that oppress us’ (1982: 120). According to bell hooks there is a form of endless argument and debate as to whether or not racism was a feminist issue (1982: 122). It is important to note that the problem for women in post-colonial societies like the Seychelles is not just racism. This is because both the white and the black women, the Indian and the Chinese women, the brown women and the mullato women (mixed-blood) were colonised. The oppression of women in post-colonial Seychelles is even more problematic because ‘race’ is not used as a determinant when research is carried out. So, it is almost impossible to know the experiences of white women and women of colour in the Seychelles. It becomes more problematic when mixed-women who are fair skinned are considered by others as white, but they consider themselves as brown. As bell hooks noted ‘feminists tended to



evoke an image of women as a collective group' (1982: 141) when this is not necessarily the case. The colonised women experience oppression differently from the non-colonised women. The plight of the colonised women is different from that of the western women. Whilst a western woman might consider certain actions as gendered, to the colonised woman the same action might be regarded as a 'norm'. For example, as it will be discussed in the empirical chapter on care, it is considered as the norm for daughters to assume caring duties for their elderly parents in post-colonial Seychelles though this is seen as gendered in the western world. As bell hooks argued 'we must assume responsibility for drawing women together in political solidarity. That means we must assume responsibility for eliminating all the forces that divide women' (1982: 157). One way of achieving this is through a feminist post-colonial analysis.

Feminist post-colonial analysis focuses on what is meant to be a woman, on everyday feminism, where women wear the brunt of it, the power relations between women, women not being supportive to each other and women holding other women back. For example, in the Seychelles '54% women believe that a woman should obey her husband'. This data was from a report published by the Seychelles national newspaper in December 2016, which discussed the results of a Gender-based Violence (GBV) survey. The GBV survey comprised of a sample of 1109 people, (578 women and 531 men), which took place in 2016 in the Seychelles. Furthermore, the study showed that 'both men and women have negative attitudes towards rape survivors: 34% of women and 36% of men agreed that in any rape case one should question whether the victim was promiscuous'. Hence, it can be argued here, that women themselves are not supporting victims of rape, where 'women in our society are forgetting the value and power of sisterhood' (hooks, 2000: 17) and how 'we have been socialised by parents and the society to accept sexist thinking' (hooks, 2000: 19).

I am stressing that there is this need for the post-colonial woman to embrace feminism. Here, I am using bell hooks' definition of feminism as 'a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression' (hooks, 2000: 1). bell hooks' definition does not imply that men are the enemy (2000: 1). It is a definition which implies that all gendered thinking and action is the problem, whether those who perpetuate it are female or male, child or adult (hooks, 2000: 1). Most people do not understand sexism, or if they do, think it is not a problem (hooks, 2000: 1). Women have realised that females could be sexist as well (hooks, 2000: 3). hooks further argues that 'we all knew that we have been socialised as females by patriarchal thinking to see ourselves as inferior to men, to see ourselves as always and in competition with one another for patriarchal approval, to look upon each other with jealousy, fear, and hatred' (2000: 14). hooks notes that many individuals, be it men or women have falsely assume that sexism is no longer a problem (2000: 17). Gendered practices remain a problem even in the Seychelles, where for example, 'once you [woman] are married, automatically your husband's surname will be your new surname. You need not go to Civil Status office to change your surname' (Government of Seychelles, 2015). It is as if when a Seychellois woman gets married she has little to no say whether she can keep her maiden surname as her surname changes automatically.

Lewis and Mills reaffirmed how much a knowledge of feminist theory can help to make sense of varied postcolonial experiences (2003: 20). This is so because post-colonialism considers the cultural similarities that have emerged since the end of the colonial period (Sharp, 2009: 7) though some cultural differences can be identified. For example, in contrast to the Seychelles, Barbados, an island that has in past times been described as 'Little England' (Potter and Dann, 1987) little has changed: there still exist multiple and hierarchical white subjectivities, cut across by social class, gender and sexuality (Jones, 2003) and at the apex of this hierarchy a classical white English hegemony still dominates

(Potter and Dann, 1987: 315). Moreover, while having attained political and social enfranchisement for the predominantly black population, the economic and, by extension, social and political hegemony of the white planter class remains virtually unchanged (Lewis, 2001; Potter and Phillips, 2006). Lewis (2001) argues that white domination in Barbados has been so deeply ingrained through social culturalization that there is a significant level of acceptance and internalization of the status quo. Lewis (2001) argues that this is due to the continuing historical legacy of colonial rule which has resulted in the creation and reproduction of a powerful white planter class. Lewis (2001) forwards the notion of white privilege to explain white dominance in the economic and social sectors in Barbados and argues that this is maintained by a social practice of racial stratification and segregation that is not legally enforced but which is widely adhered to on the island.

Caribbean families can be compared to those in the Seychelles. For example, in contrast to Seychellois families, the role of family members is different in Caribbean families. The father's principal role is economic provider and protector of the family and they are also involved in the discipline of the children, especially the males, and often have a distant relationship with their daughters (Roopnarine *et al.*, 1996 in Seegobin, 2000). In general, they are not actively involved in day-to-day childcare, especially for young infants. This should not be construed as not caring for their children; they tend to feel that women are better with children at this stage. However, the late twentieth century saw some men becoming more involved in their children's lives, spending more time playing and talking with them (Roopnarine *et al.*, 1996 in Seegobin, 2000).

In her research on specifically the Caribbean Chamberlain (2003) discussed the role of grandmothers in Caribbean families. Though her research has been done earlier in contrast to the one I have carried out in the Seychelles, her discussions can be used as examples which

can be compared to the Seychellois families. This shows that few studies have been carried out on post-colonial families. The role of grandmothers in the Caribbean is somewhat similar to that of Seychellois grandmothers. Despite the prevalence in the literature on matrifocality and mother centeredness in Caribbean families, there is very little focus on the role of grandmothers (and grandfathers), except in their role as surrogate parents, and as a characteristic of lower-class families (Chamberlain, 2003). Grandparents, in particularly grandmothers are considered as important and reflection of cultural beliefs in the centrality of family, and cultural practices in sharing responsibility for childrearing (Chamberlain, 2003) and this is similar in the Seychelles.

A study in Jamaica can also be compared to the Seychelles. Here it could be seen that in Jamaica the families are different compared to those in Seychelles. Here, I wish to reiterate that the research took earlier than the one in Seychelles but because of a lack of research on postcolonial families I have to focus on this one. It was found that amongst all the 270 families studied in Jamaica, not a single one consisted only of parents and their children (Chamberlain, 2003). Every family included additional children and adults variously described as nephews, grandsons, stepsons, cousins, ‘aunties’ and ‘grannies’ (Simey, 1946: 84). Furthermore, in the Caribbean family there is the prevalence of ‘aunties’ and ‘grannies’ and the widespread practice of child-shifting (the temporary or permanent fostering of the child by kin folk, usually a grandmother, aunt or a close family friend) (Chamberlain, 2003). The occurrence of child fostering, or child-shifting is a feature recognised in many Caribbean households (Clarke, 1957; Senior, 1991). In the Seychelles child fostering is a rare occurrence and many families are consisted only of parents and their children.

Both post-colonial Seychelles and the Caribbean families share another similarity. In the absence of a husband the mother gets involved in the child-rearing activities and the daughter has an obligation to support not only her child but the household in which she lives (Chamberlain, 2003). Grandparents – and grandmothers in particular – could be relied upon to provide practical support in childcare (Chamberlain, 2003: 65). In the Caribbean family networks all social and economic rights and obligations are not concentrated in smaller autonomous nuclear family units but are rather placed in wider webs of relations where relatives outside the immediate family may play a prominent part (Olwig, 1999: 268). In the Seychelles, this is the case for some families but not for others. These similarities and differences will be discussed further in the empirical chapters. When looking at those post-colonial societies, like the Caribbean and the Seychelles, it is clear to see that these societies are very gendered. In these post-slavery societies, the division between the genders persists. Therefore, post-colonialism should also focus on gender divisions and not just ‘race’. There is this need for a feminist post-colonial analysis of such societies, societies which are very gendered. I wish to reiterate on a final note that it is crucial that women come to have a voice in a patriarchal society that socializes us to repress us (hooks, 2015: 80).

To sum up this section on post-colonisation, Bhabha argues that colonialism, which has been defined as almost always a consequence of imperialism in the implanting of settlements on distant territory (Said, 1993: 3) has defiled culture and territory (Bhabha, 1994: 41), and was destructive with regards to the indigenous cultures with which it came into contact (Young, 2001: 6). This does not fit within the Seychellois culture when it was a French colony. As discussed in the section on the history of the Seychelles, the Seychelles was originally uninhabited hence there were no ‘indigenous cultures’ present with which the coloniser came into contact. This is the *only* post-colonial argument that doesn’t fit within the Seychelles context. The most relevant post-colonial arguments have been seen to apply

well to the Seychelles context. For example, many Seychellois dispute that the old mindset that has been linked to colonialism such as issues around 'race' are no longer relevant, but it has been argued that hypocrisy about 'race' is present in the Seychelles (Franda, 1982: 38) and the analysis of the data also proves this to be the case, that 'race' remains relevant. Gender issues which are a characteristic of colonized people will be seen to be very pertinent in the Seychelles, especially where care is concerned. However, as discussed previously, what post-colonial writers have written on gender issues are not relevant to the Seychelles context and this is where family practices will fill some of this gap. As Memmi argues, all colonized people have a lot in common, and that all the oppressed are alike in some ways (1974: 5) though, in the Seychelles context more research is needed to shed light on this. More research is needed to gather empirical data about the Seychellois people as Campling argues how few reliable data are available (2011: 98). As Loomba argues, the legacies of colonialism are varied and multiple even if they share some important features (2005: 20).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how the history of the Seychelles has proven to be of significance in helping to understand the Seychellois family. This has to do with the fact that the Seychelles was once colonised, by not one, but two Western countries. This colonisation has impacted on family life in the Seychelles in three main ways. Firstly, it has created particular racial issues. These racial issues accord with Fanon's interpretation of 'race' in post-colonial societies. His work has proved to be of significance because when I was reviewing his work I found several of his arguments to be fitting to the Seychelles post-colonial context. Secondly, colonisation has created a dependency complex. This was related to the power that the masters had over the slaves, and this has been reproduced in

some way by the state maintaining power over the people through the provision of welfare. Thirdly, colonisation has created particular gender relations, which has been seen to be pertinent in post-colonial Seychelles. The empirical chapters will reveal that, however, in the Seychelles, family practices are shaped by mostly gender issues. This review shows that there is a gap in the literature about the roles of women in post-colonial island states as I had to depend on sources on western societies like Britain. It indicates that gender roles remain and that is because of colonisation. These gender issues can be said to be found in many Creole societies which are products of master-slave relations. All three of these characteristics of post-colonisation are found in the Seychelles which is described as being a nation made of Creoles. This chapter has also revealed that there is a gap in post-colonial literature about the effect of colonialism on small islands, like the Seychelles. The chapter has also revealed how there is a need to use a feminist post-colonial analysis even if literature about this theory remains limited. This thesis about family responsibilities in the Seychelles, will begin to fill this gap in post-colonial studies, feminist post-colonial analysis and literature. The review has also revealed that there is a lack of sociological research in the Seychelles generically. This was evident in my reliance on sources written about other societies, specifically Britain. The next chapter will focus entirely on other sociological sources on family sociology because there is none available on the Seychelles specifically.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Family Sociology**

#### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter I focused on the Seychelles as a post-colonial society and showed how there is a lack of research on Seychellois families as I had to rely on sources of literature from other societies like Britain. In this chapter, I am going to focus on family sociology broadly because of this lack of family sociology in the Seychelles. Therefore, this chapter reviews concerns of family sociology generally to develop the themes and concepts which will be explored in my empirical work. In the empirical chapters I will discuss these in the post-colonial context. The subsequent section focuses on the things that family do – which are essentially family practices. Here it will be shown that there is a need to consider the racial dimension on family practices because this is how post-colonialism becomes relevant. Post-colonialism, which was discussed in the previous chapter is relevant and important to this project because family practices do not consider racial issues. Family practices focus on gendered practices. It was revealed in the previous chapter that post-colonial writings about gender relations are problematic in the Seychelles context, which is why family practices approach is important here. One of the family practices, which will be discussed in the empirical chapters is the provision of support. As support tends to take place mostly between the generations and this can produce intergenerational solidarity the section on support also discusses this. Another family practice involves the provision of care. One of the empirical chapters will examine how care is considered as a gendered practice so there is a focus on gendered care. With care being identified as one of the triple role of women the next subsection discusses this. Subsequent sections focus on family values which include



family responsibilities, duties and obligations, reciprocity and commitment. All these values have moral dimensions, so morality is discussed. The final section discusses ambivalence. These concepts will be applied to my empirical data and to the Seychelles, in the context of a post-colonial island society.

## **Family Practices**

I begin by discussing family practices because my research is adopting a family practices approach – essentially things that family do – in a post-colonial setting. Here the work of Morgan (1996, 1999) from British sociology is of utmost importance. Since the analysis of Morgan's work is more useful to my project, Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards (2011) offer a useful explanation of his ideas behind family practices and this is what I will now explore. So, the discussion of the six features underpinning Morgan's family practices is a characterisation from Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards (2011). Morgan (1999) argues that sociological approaches to the study of families in late modernity have moved away from the study of 'the family' as an institution and have looked more at 'family practices'. The focus has been on what people actually do in their families in an era marked by powerful trends towards globalization, individualization and de-traditionalism and in which families have become ever more fluid and diverse (Saltiel, 2013: 16). Morgan (1996, 1999) developed the concept of 'family practices' to highlight how 'family' is not a strategic category or structure defined by residence, blood ties and the legal system. Rather, because we live in a complex and fluid society, family has to be actively created by its members and family is something that individuals 'do' rather than something that people 'are' (Morgan, 1996, 2011). As a term 'family practices' is broad because it contains everything concerning 'those relationships and activities that are constructed as being to do with family matters'

(Morgan, 1996: 192). These can be practices to do with marriage or partnering and with parenting and generations (Morgan, 2003: 2).

Morgan identifies six key features underpinning his conception of family practices (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 88). Morgan's first feature of family practices is that it alerts us to the perspectives of both actors and observers and the interaction between these viewpoints (Morgan, 1996). Secondly, the concept focuses on activity rather than an object – family practices in this sense being seen as 'doing and action' (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). Thirdly, the idea conveys a sense of the daily and unremarkable nature of people's family existence, the mundane small activities such as preparing food, leisure activities, that link into what Morgan refers to as a wider system of meanings about family life (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). Fourthly, linked to the 'dailiness' of family life, the term invokes regularity and repetition which can be identified as routine such as cleaning the house every Saturday or going to mass every Sunday (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). Fifthly, Morgan (1996) stresses the sense of fluidity that the concept carries, in the sense that while family practices are regular and routinized they are also open-ended. Family practices are not discrete but connect with and relate to values, sites and practices more broadly (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). For example, they may be related to and/or understood as ethnic or religious practices (for example, how people from particular ethnic or religious groups live their family lives), as gendered practices (for example, expectations about mothering and fathering), as age practices (for example, parents taking responsibility for their children) or as body practices (for example, who may or may not touch whom, when and where) (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). The final feature of family practices is their constitution as a major link between history and biography (Morgan, 1996). The historical context in which family life takes place has a bearing on family practices, and this is subject to shifts and change while, at the same time,

family practices are also rooted and created in an individual's life history and experiences (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). Similarly, Smart asserts that family is what families do, and there is a need to explore those families and relationships which exist in our imaginings and memories, since these are just as real (2007: 4).

Family practices can also be reformulated as gender practices (Morgan, 1999: 21) for example the female dominated practice of childcare (Gillies, Edwards, and Horsley, 2016: 226). As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the three main characteristics of post-colonial societies is that of gender. However, it was argued in that chapter that post-colonialist writings about gender relations are problematic in a Seychelles context. Family practices are gendered in the Seychelles, yet gender power relations have not been politicised in the Seychelles as in other post-colonial contexts. This is not to infer that gender is not significant, indeed family practices are one of the most important ways through which gendered identities are constructed and maintained. So, Morgan's family practices can be argued to be relevant to the Seychelles context in this case, as certain family practices can be considered as gender practices and it will be revealed in the empirical chapters how this is the case in the Seychelles. For example, the provision of care will be seen as a gendered practice. As West and Zimmerman argue there is a need to understand gender as a routine, methodological and recurring accomplishment sociologically (1987: 126). They posit that 'doing' of gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures' (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126).

Juvrud, and Rennels, (2017) suggest that gender stereotypes play a causal role in shaping an individual's endorsement of stereotyped preferences and behaviours. Caring for children remains a gendered practice (Gillies, 2007: 9). The effects of gender pervade every

aspect of our lives (Gillies, 2007: 10). For example, in general, the mother's principal roles have been identified by Western sociologists, as taking care of the children and be the primary nurturer in the family (Delphy and Leonard, 1992; Oakley 2005; Parsons, 1956; Walby, 1986). Along the same vein, Sclater argues that a focus on family practices highlights the importance of everyday activities that involve social actors in *doing* family (2012: 126). Here it can be argued that the hallmark of such practices is that the family comes into *being* through the *doing* of these activities (Sclater, 2012: 126). Such activities can include a family picnic, writing down the monthly shopping list or providing support to a sick family member. The next section will focus on one of the main family practices which will be discussed empirically and that is support.

## **Support**

I will now focus on the concept of support, which will be discussed in the empirical chapters. As Gubrium, (1987) argues, the image of the family is constructed as a source of support and caregiving. Finch argues (1989) that there is some degree of self-interest when relatives offer support. This is in line with Becker's argument that theories built around the related concepts of social sanction and social control propose that people act consistently because activity of some particular kind is regarded as 'right' and 'proper' in their society or social group (1960: 33). Ribbens McCarthy, *et al.*, argue that the 'family' unit serves as a mutual support union with 'everyone doing their bit' (2003: 105). In addition, Western cultures nowadays are characterized by a high degree of individualization, in which being independent and developing one's own capacities is highly valued (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). The provision of support to family members, neighbours or friends is not self-evident under a doctrine of individualism, and the question what a correct interpretation

of familial obligations ought to be becomes even more pressing (Stuifbergen and Van Delden, 2011: 63).

Finch notes however, that a good deal of support does pass between members of families (1989: 36). She further notes that some support from kin are reliable, but there are some types which are more reliable than others (Finch, 1989: 14). There is a sense in which family relationships are regarded as providing structures of support which are uniquely reliable, but at the same time it is obvious that not everyone draws upon such support in practice (Finch, 1989). Clearly assistance is not given to all kin invariably, and whatever the circumstances, but there are certain relationships where it is given almost automatically (Finch, 1989: 14). The question of who is involved is also diverse (Finch and Mason, 1993: 31). I reviewed literature on some empirical studies in other countries (see Coenen-Huther, *et al.*, 1994 (Netherlands), Lennartsson, *et al.*, 2010 (Sweden); Majamaa, 2014 (Finland); Morse, and Lau, 2007 (Australia) because there is a lack of literature about familial support in the Seychelles. Since the project is about vertical support that takes place between the generations, I will now discuss the support between parents and children, and grandparents and grandchildren.

### Support between parents and children

Parents and their children are said to have a special relationship, and this is where the strongest feelings of duty and obligation can be found (Finch, 1989: 36). Biology seems to be the foundation of social obligation most obviously in the case of parents (Finch, 1989: 36) and children. There are different types of support which flows from parents to children and it is the parents that are regarded as the most appropriate relatives to offer support, if they are capable (Finch, 1989: 37). There is also the evidence that children are favoured over

other relatives and they are expected to assist when it is required of them (Finch, 1989). Mothers continue to be an important source of support for their daughters, (Finch, 1989: 37) especially when the daughters have children of their own. The idea that it is entirely natural for mothers and daughters to be particularly supportive of each other recurs again and again in research studies (Finch, 1989: 40). However, Finch argues that this support is not universal (1989: 40). Therefore, Finch suggests that where family duty and obligation is found there is a need to consider the gender of the participants as well as the cultural context (Finch, 1989: 41). There is not always a sense of a strong obligation between parents and children.

As mentioned previously, I reviewed literature on some empirical studies in other countries. For example, Holdsworth argues that it is not sufficient to focus on what parents do for children, but it is more appropriate to look at the relationships between young people and their parents (2007: 59). Other studies note that parental help and support is common, but it is not clear (for example, Majamaa, 2014). Majamaa argues that parents may not have the ability, the resources or the will to support their adult children (2014: 12). She notes that the lack of financial support is more common than the lack of practical help, whereas received practical help extends beyond the early years of adulthood (Majamaa, 2014: 5). Broad research on intergenerational help and support has revealed that usually need is behind the parental help and support, but also resources, ability, possibility and willingness to give help effects this (Majamaa, 2014: 6). Having a partner also seems to affect resources: parents who are married or cohabiting are more likely to give practical help and financial support to their adult children than parents living alone (Lennartsson, Silverstein and Fritzell, 2010). Grandparents can also provide support to their children and grandchildren.

### Support between grandparents and grandchildren

Another type of support is between grandparents and their grandchildren. Grandparents provide many unacknowledged functions in contemporary families (Szinovacz, 1998). They are important role models in the socialization of grandchildren (Elder, Rudkin, and Conger, 1994; King and Elder, 1997), they provide economic resources to younger generation family members (Bengston and Harootyan, 1994) and they contribute to cross-generational solidarity and family continuity over time (King, 1994; Silverstein *et al.*, 1998). Relative to parent-child ties, there are fewer perceived obligations of support (Rossi and Rossi, 1990) and there is consequently, greater freedom in defining relationships between grandparents and grandchildren (Connidis, 2001).

Kemp (2004) argues that within each generation, there is a consensus regarding how grandparents and adult grandchildren should behave. There are certain shared expectations pertaining to the provision of support and assistance, but owing to culturally prevalent ideas regarding youth, old age, independence, individual rights, family obligation and intergenerational relationships, the roles of grandparent and adult grandchild are guided by somewhat different norms and responsibilities (Kemp, 2004: 507). The increased longevity of parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and other older family members in recent decades represents a resource of kin available for help and support that can be, and frequently is, activated in times of need (King, 1994; Silverstein, Parrott and Bengston, 1995). Aassve *et al.*, (2012) argue that the older generations often serve as a significant source of support and help for young families, not only by caring for young grandchildren but also through financial transfers and provision of practical help. However, the extent to which such intergenerational transfers are present and important clearly depends on the context

considered (Aassve *et al.*, 2012). Ultimately support between the generations can lead to intergenerational solidarity.

### Generation and intergenerational solidarity

The concepts of generation and intergenerational solidarity will be discussed in the empirical chapters. Generation is also being used as a comparative point of analysis. Increased life expectancy coupled with fertility decline has generated a new family structure, often described as multi-generation or ‘beanpole families’, where, over time, vertical relationships among relatives have become stronger (Brannen *et al.*, 2004; Giarrusso *et al.*, 1995). Generation has many meanings: first, as biological or kinship relation (Alwin and McCammon, 2004), second as an age cohort that experiences the same set of historical conditions over the life-course, while a third meaning refers to belonging and identity (Biggs *et al.*, 2007 cited in Brannen, 2014). Mannheim (1952 [1923]: 290) defined generations as ‘individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process’. In Mannheim’s approach, age is uppermost, but generational location is also important as is the distinction between generation as actuality and as unit (Brannen, 2014: 485). Sociological research placing generation centre stage has become more prominent over the past decades. The interest in intergenerational relationships has engendered a number of studies (Nilsen, 2014: 478). Some of these have looked at social relationships across three or more generations in families with a focus on care and work (see Brannen *et al.*, 2004). For example, Berne (1964: 151) suggested that ‘games are passed on from generation to generation’, explaining how particular practices and attitudes are perpetuated by families and social groups.



A focus on intergenerational relationships at the level of families is important because they increasingly form the experience of most people (Brannen, 2014: 486-487). The intergenerational transmission of traditional cultural values and expectations may strengthen collective ethnic identities and bonds (Wray and Ali, 2014: 470) as well as increase intergenerational solidarity (Bengston *et al.*, 2002). Intergenerational transfers in families are increasingly a topic of interest in the context of reductions in the welfare state and increased longevity (Brannen, 2006: 133). Intergenerational family relations have been explained using conceptual frameworks of solidarity, conflict and ambivalence (Bengston, 2001; Connidis and McMullin, 2002; Lüscher and Pillemer, 1998). Hodgkin (2014) argues that new intergenerational families provide a rich source of vertical support. This support and care goes both ways as older people are often the donors, not the net recipients of intergenerational care, for example, by providing care to grandchildren (Hodgkin, 2014: 57). Morse and Lau (2007) add that other conceptualisations of intergenerational solidarity draw attention to key differences in norms and moral behaviour between generations. Here, they argue, both increasing individualisation and diversity in family forms are thought to weaken intergenerational bonds (Morse and Lau, 2007). To illustrate, focus has been placed on the baby boomer generation and whether they are willing to assume the emotional and physical demands of caring for their parents (Morse and Lau, 2007).

Several sociologists have generated theory and research on intergenerational solidarity, conflict and ambivalence in family relationships (Timonen, Conlon, Scharf, and Carney, 2013). Silverstein *et al.*, trace the development of the concept of intergenerational conflict back to the 1930s, when Wirth first coined the phrase ‘weakening bonds of kinship,’ to argue that young people had become unmoored from older generations (2012: 1247). Timonen *et al.*, (2013) introduce the notion that intergenerational solidarity has both private and public dimensions. Timonen *et al.*, (2013) conceptualise private solidarity as located

within the family and comprising expectations regarding the care of older people. Alternatively, public solidarity is conceptualised as a broader societal agreement about public expenditure on care-related services for older people where greater solidarity in the public sphere (e.g., through the public provision of long term care for older people) leads to lower levels of solidarity in the private sphere (through families withdrawing from providing care) (Hodgkin, 2014: 57).

## Care

I will now discuss care because it is one of the central key themes which will be discussed in the final empirical chapter. Providing care for the elderly and the sick is identified as one of the main family practices in the Seychelles and this will be explored in the empirical chapters. Concerns about population ageing and increasing levels of dependency give rise to consideration of how care needs will be met, particularly in contexts where family has been the main source of elder care (Conlon *et al.*, 2014: 139). Elder care embodies a set of relations between care givers and care receivers, which crosses the formal and informal, the paid and unpaid, and the professional and unqualified (Williams, 2012). Care is also a moral orientation; it refers to values such as love, commitment, responsibility, empathy and interdependence (Williams, 2012: 106). Ungerson (1983) has drawn attention to the distinction between caring *for* and caring *about* someone: the latter implying feelings of concern, the former involving some form of activity. Graham (1983) argued that informal caring is a specific type of relationship which is based upon both affection and service. Even though I am focussing on informal care, the main focus of the study will be about caring *for* someone rather than caring *about* someone. This is so because providing care for someone does not always mean that the provider cares *about* that person. This will be reflected in the

final empirical chapter. So, when the term care is being used it refers to caring for someone which involves an activity. Even though informal care's nature is one that is personally directed: given to people by virtue of their pre-established social relationship (Qureshi and Walker, 1989: 146) this is not always the case as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

According to Finch and Mason, it is not enough to assume that the family as a social institution is ready, willing and able to shoulder the burden of supporting its members who cannot fully care for themselves, either practically or financially (1993: 10). Milligan adds on that most care support in the home is undertaken by family, friends and neighbours (2009: 2). In some cases, relatives might want to take care of their own but because of other commitments like career, children, it makes it difficult to practice this (Finch and Mason, 1993). Milligan argues that care giving for older people involves a 'complex pattern on people (formal and informal carers), places (domestic/non-domestic) and times (daily, intermittent, continuous)' (2009: 3).

It has been argued that children should support their older parents at times of need (Cicirelli, 1988, 1990; Silverstein, 2006). Gans, and Silverstein argue that 'more than an expectation of one's own behaviour, norms of filial responsibility refer to the recognized duties and obligations that define the social role of adult children with respect to their ageing parents' (2006: 962). With regards to parent-care responsibility, Blenkner (1965) invoked the concept of familial maturity to describe the transition of adult children from being relatively autonomous from their parents to being dependable sources of support to them (Silverstein, 2006: 962). At a practical level, however, familial norms may change in response to personal circumstances that affect the ability to provide parental care (e.g. competing demands) or cause one to retroactively attribute supportive behaviour to

internalized normative values (e.g. providing parental care) (Silverstein, 2006: 962). As it will be discussed in the empirical chapters, care is identified as a gendered practice.

### Gendered care

This subsection is about gendered care. It will be argued that care in the Seychelles is gendered – that it is women who assume care roles. However, because of a lack of literature on gender roles of the post-colonial woman, I had to rely on Western literature about such roles. Finch argues that in the negotiation between the parties over who will be identified as the main carer, gender remains one of the main considerations, (1989: 28) where caring often falls to mothers in the majority of cases (Smith, 2004) or daughters of dependent parent/s. Caring is a choice for men but an obligation for women because gender identity is intensely tied to caring responsibilities (Hanlon, 2012: 40). Some recent accounts of care have emphasized women's agency as caregivers and illuminated the skilled, reflexive and reciprocal nature of care and identity (Smart and Neale, 1999: 20).

Coltrane argues that despite progress in women's professional advancement, the basic assumption that family caregiving is the exclusive responsibility of women remains (2004: 215). The vast majority of providers of informal care are women, particularly women in the 50 and over age group (Bevan, 2001; Morse and Lau, 2007). However, research has found gender expectations prevail in providing this care and it is predominantly undertaken by daughters, daughters-in-law and partners (Doty, Jackson, and Crown, 1998; Morse and Lau, 2007). This group in particular, provides the bulk of physical care associated with assistance with daily living tasks (showering, feeding, and shopping), mobility and housework (Fine, 2012). Hays (in Coltrane, 2004) argues that separate-spheres ideology shapes personal as well as institutional expectations about women being more kind, caring,

and nurturing than men. Women do provide more family care and emotional support than men, but Hays demonstrates that conventional expectations for 'intensive mothering' are socially constructed and subject to historical change (cited in Coltrane, 2004: 216).

Townsend (2002) describes how men's parenting is mediated by wives who schedule and manage family life, as mothers and fathers collude in a gendered system of parenting that keeps fathers on the side lines as helpers, playmates, and occasional disciplinarians (in Coltrane, 2004: 216). The continued symbolic significance of intensive mothers and breadwinner fathers serves to reproduce unequal gender relations at a time when gender equality is gaining acceptance in education and in the workplace (Coontz cited in Coltrane, 2004: 216). There is plenty of evidence that shows that even when there is an apparent choice between a male and female relative, women are more likely to be carers – daughters and even daughters-in-law rather than sons (Finch, 1989). This is normally taken to reflect a generalised normative expectation that women are the appropriate carers (Finch, 1989: 28). Providing care has been identified as one of women's triple roles.

### The triple role of women

Gender role ideology has been found to be a powerful determinant of the division of household labour (Baxter and Western, 1998; Crompton, 1997, 2006; Ross, 1987). Societal ideologies about the 'woman's domain' being involved with domestic duties (Oakley, 2005), childcare responsibilities (Baxter and Western, 1998) and taking care of the sick and elderly (Hanlon, 2012; Smith, 2004) persist up to this day. When children are ill it is usually the mother who will take time off work to look after that child. As Cooper (1971, 1972) argued, the family is an 'ideological conditioning device' where children, and as feminists argue, girls, learn to conform to the societal norms and values, where girls are 'conditioned' by

their parents to be submissive and to be feminine, and eventually these girls will grow up, have family of their own and socialize their daughters to be 'girls' and this cycle unfortunately continues.

To an extent unprecedented in history, roles as paid workers and as caregiving daughters and daughters-in-law to dependent older people have been added to women's traditional roles as wives, homemakers, mothers, and grandmothers (Brody, 1982: 471). This has been referred to as a 'triple role' (Hochschild, 1997) or 'triple day' (Grahame, 2003). More recent literature has focussed on the 'sandwich generation' which is made up of women who balance roles of mother and caring for their elderly parents (Coleman and Ganong, 2000; Evans *et al.*, 2016; Hammer and Neal, 2008; Pierret, 2006; Pines *et al.*, 2011). Essentially this 'sandwich generation' is not only responsible for a rapidly growing group of elderly persons but also have obligations to their dependent children (Coleman and Ganong, 2000: 34) as well as independent children and grandchildren as will be discussed in the empirical chapters. However, limited research has examined the individual role balance strategies used specifically by working 'sandwich' generation women that might mediate the impact of personal or environmental factors on role balance (Evans *et al.*, 2016: 2).

The domestic division of labour relates to gender role ideology, where women's primary role is seen as nurturers and men as breadwinners (Hochschild, 1989). There is still the patriarchal ideology that domestic duties are women's domain which Oakley refers to as 'the 'natural' domesticity of women' (2005: 97). Women are also seen as responsible for 'emotional work' (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Hochschild, 1983; 2003). Most research still shows a clear division of labour within the household with men participating mainly in outdoor work and women taking primary responsibility for childcare and indoor activities such as cooking, cleaning and laundry (Baxter, 1993; Berk, 1985; Pleck, 1985; Sharpe, 1984;

Sullivan, 1996). Girls are expected to help with domestic chores around the house, whereas boys are expected to do activities outside the house, such as taking care of the yard and running errands (Seegobin, 2003). Motherhood itself is a socially constructed identity which is negotiated in daily life through localised discourses (Holloway, 1998). Femininity and mothering are socially aligned with caring (Holdsworth and Robinson, 2008) where mothers feel the pressure to conform to local parenting cultures (Valentine, 1997).

Baxter and Western argue that, as a result of childcare and housework duties, women spend significantly greater amounts of time on domestic duties than men (1998: 101) and hence, a significantly greater proportion of their time is spent in domestic chores (1998: 116). This is grounded in a gendered division of labour (Holland *et al.*, 1998; Parsons, 1942). In order to manage their time commitments, women rely on non-parental childcare which also facilitates their workforce participation and promote a more equal gender division of labour (Craig and Powell, 2013: 101). By cutting back on housework, their own personal care and leisure time, and by multitasking activities, employed mothers substantially match the childcare of mothers who are not employed (Craig and Powell, 2013: 102). Ultimately the management of childcare (Doucet, 2001; Vincent *et al.*, 2004) remains one of women's many responsibilities.

### **Family responsibilities, duties and obligations**

I will now discuss the concepts of family responsibilities, duties and obligations because they are the main themes to be discussed in the empirical chapters. It must be noted that these concepts have both value and moral dimensions as well as family practices dimensions. In Coleman and Ganong's (2000) study about family responsibilities they found out that people's most important responsibilities were to themselves and to their children.

They argued that emotional closeness among family members, resources, urgency for help and reciprocity were important contexts (Coleman and Ganong, 2000: 36). Older participants had more responsibility towards the younger generations than vice versa (Coleman and Ganong, 2000: 36). They argued that the concept of family responsibilities is fundamental in many theories of family functioning, family caregiving, and informal help-seeking (Coleman and Ganong, 2000: 35).

Social and political-economic discourses that prioritise familial responsibility as a moral imperative have been well documented, particularly for women (Armstrong and Kits, 2004; Binney and Estes, 1988; Finch and Mason, 1990,1991,1993; Hooyman and Gonyea, 1995). Some feminist writers have further argued that a ‘sense of responsibility’ permeates women’s approach to family relationships in a way which is not replicated for men (Finch and Mason, 1990: 153). This also reveals a reflection of the gender division of responsibility and labour in the performance of domestic tasks more generally (Finch and Mason, 1990: 153). Raising children is still predominantly a female responsibility (Gillies, 2007: 9). It is often taken for granted that children need security, stability and safety in order to thrive, and assumed that parents have a responsibility to provide this (Gillies, 2007: 146).

In her work on familial responsibility, specifically on choice and obligation of adult children Funk (2015) argues that the term ‘responsibility’ tends to imply a strong moral imperative. Because of this, she argues that individuals may be sensitive to how they discuss this concept, so as to present their behaviours and feelings to align with traditional social norms of family relationships (Funk, 2015: 389). Funk (2015) notes that although there is this moral imperative of familial responsibility to some extent, responsibility (as obligation) did not always fit with their portrayals of family relationships, and choice was a dominant theme throughout people’s accounts. Funk (2015) argues that her findings reflect partly the



individualisation of society (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Jansz, 1991; Rose, 1996) and partly the tendency towards ambivalence in the postmodern condition (Bauman, 1991). Symbolic associations of responsibility with obligation and burden were difficult to reconcile with interpretations of familial relationships as loving and moral, and participants' desires to construct themselves as autonomous (Funk, 2015: 415).

In his work on familial duty Keller argues that children have special duties to their parents: 'there are things that we ought to do for our parents, but not for anyone' (2006: 254). Duncan argued that a duty is an action which ought to be done, and the word ought is essential to the description of duty (1957: 64). These special duties that children have are special because they are not duties that people have to other individuals generically (Keller, 2006: 254). He asserts that someone might have the duty to keep in touch with their parents, or to take them into their home when they are sick or elderly, but these are not things that this person is obliged to do for just anyone (Keller, 2006: 254). For him familial duties are important, and it is common for people to make sacrifices to provide for their parents, and to do so, in part, because they feel that it is their duty to do so and that those who neglect their familial duties can evoke deep disapproval, especially from the wider society (Keller, 2006: 254). Here, Duncan asserted that 'we recognise that morality calls upon us to restrict our natural desires and act only in a dutiful manner' (1957: 74).

Keller posits that questions about what individuals are required to do for their parents, and what they can legitimately expect from their children, are difficult and controversial because there are differences of opinion between those of different cultures and generations (2006: 254). Some cultural differences appear to be straightforward ethical disagreements about what children should do for their parents, independently of background conditions (Keller, 2006: 271). A healthy parent-child relationship adds value to the life of

both parent and child for as long as it exists (Keller, 2006: 265). Some are obligated to do more than others. Here, Finch and Mason argue that if there is a strong sense of duty anywhere, it would be found in the parent-child relationships (1990: 152). They assert that it is the central kinship bond, the least ambiguous of adult kin relationships and the relationship most clearly founded upon a sense of obligation (Finch and Mason, 1990: 152).

According to Finch and Mason, responsibilities between kin are not the straightforward products of rules of obligation, rather, they are the products of negotiation (1993: 60). By negotiation they mean that the course of action which a person takes emerges out of his or her interaction with other people (Finch and Mason, 1993: 60). Consequently, when a specific need arises it seems obvious who will help (Finch and Mason, 1993: 61). As such, individuals may increasingly interpret family relationships as being most appropriately rooted in choice and affection, rather than obligation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2001; Fine, 2005; Guberman *et al.*, 2011). Obligations can also be seen as part of normative rules which operate within society, and which get applied in appropriate situations and on the other hand, they can be seen as agreements which operate between specific individuals, and are arrived at through a process of negotiation (Finch, 1987). Finch and Mason argue that negotiation can either be explicit or implicit, where explicit negotiation is one which is open, round-the-table discussions prompted by specific needs and events (1993: 61). An example is when a crisis occurs in a family like a death or illness. Family members consult each other and discuss who could give what kind of help (Finch and Mason, 1993: 61). In contrast, implicit negotiation doesn't involve open discussion, yet people do find ways of communicating with each other about what kinds of responsibility they regard as reasonable for themselves and for other people (Finch and Mason, 1993: 61).

Most people do give assent at this normative level to the idea of familial obligations (i.e. that adult children are obligated to their parents) but that this assent is neither universal nor unconditional (Finch and Mason, 1990: 154). Cognitive dissonance and attribution theories help explain why individuals who have provided support to their ageing parents develop a stronger sense of familial obligation than those who have never provided such support (Bromley and Blieszner, 1997; Peek *et al.*, 1998; Rossi and Rossi, 1990). Strengthening familial norms is a means of bringing attitudes and beliefs about oneself into conformity with how one behaves (Finley *et al.*, 1988). Conversely, when support to older parents cannot be delivered, for instance because of competing obligations, familial responsibility may be lowered (Bromley and Blieszner 1997; Gans, and Silverstein, 2006). Finch argues that the study of family obligations, duties and responsibilities can be centrally concerned with the life story of individuals and how they are intertwined particularly within the kin group (1987: 168). For example, Dykstra and Fokkema, (2011) argue that people have obligations towards their elderly parents because of reciprocity.

## **Reciprocity**

I will now focus on the concept of reciprocity. It will be discussed alongside commitment in the final empirical chapter. It is the main theme of one of the vignettes that was used to capture the participants' values. Cicero says, 'there is no duty more indispensable than that of returning a kindness,' (quoted in Gouldner, 1960: 161). People are acting reciprocally if they reward kind actions (Falk and Fischbacher, 2006). There is a large body of evidence which indicates that reciprocity is a powerful determinant of human behaviour – experiments and questionnaire studies performed by psychologists and economists as well as an impressive literature in sociology, ethnology and anthropology

emphasize the omnipresence of reciprocal behaviour (Kahneman *et al.*, 1986 and Fehr and Gächter, 2000 in Falk and Fischbacher, 2006: 294).

The concept of reciprocity is a key idea which is used in explaining the foundations of mutual aid in families (Finch and Mason, 1993: 34). It refers to the way in which people exchange goods and services as part of an on-going and two-way process (Finch and Mason, 1993: 34). Dykstra and Fokkema (2011) argue that in most cultures, some care for elderly parents by adult children is generally expected, and adult children owe something to their elderly parents because their parents have done much for them. Stuifbergen and Van Delden, (2011) note that these expectations may be found among elderly parents or adult children, in social norms and in the practice of allocation decisions for state-funded home help. Expectations of different parties often do not converge, which brings up the question what expectations are legitimate in the relationship between adult child and elderly parent (Stuifbergen and Van Delden, 2011: 63). Among these expectations could be the fact that parents brought children into existence, nurtured them, educated them, and provided them with material things, among which the most basic ones of food, clothes and shelter: in short, they have created the conditions for children to exist and to use their capabilities (Van den Hoven 2006: 44 in Stuifbergen and Van Delden, 2011: 64).

Gintis argues that evidence suggests that a considerable fraction of the population, in many different societies, and under many different social conditions, including complete anonymity, behave like the strong reciprocator (2000: 171). He concludes that ‘reciprocal altruism leads to a high level of cooperation in human societies, and many behavioural scientists believe that reciprocal altruism is sufficient to explain human sociality’ (Gintis, 2000: 177) and that without strong reciprocity, then, human society would likely be quite differently organized than it is, and humans likely would be considerably less successful as

a species (Gintis, 2000: 178). With increased life expectancy, there has been a ‘temporal expansion of reciprocity’ where older people have greater and prolonged involvement in the lives of their children and grandchildren, opening up new dimensions of care (McNay, 2015: 174). In the empirical chapters, it will be revealed that reciprocity leads to the development of commitment.

## **Commitment**

Alongside reciprocity there is the concept of commitment which is one of the central themes of the final empirical chapter. In the final empirical chapter, the development and display of commitment will be discussed. Finch and Mason argue that commitment is a fruitful way of conceptualising family responsibilities (1993: 93). They note that the process of negotiating responsibilities is one through which commitments develop and emerge and that over time one individual becomes committed to giving certain forms of help to another, or to respond positively to such requests which may be made in the future (Finch and Mason, 1993). In this sense commitments are the products of negotiations about responsibilities (Finch and Mason, 1993: 93) – when requests are responded negatively, or not responded at all, it can be argued that there is no commitment or commitment has not been established by family members. Scholarship on commitment to work and family adopts the definition of commitment as being seen as an attachment that is initiated and sustained by the extent to which an individual's identification with a role, behaviour and value (Bielby, 1992: 284).

Commitment also emphasizes the seriousness of the way in which people approach these aspects of family relationships and the significance of the personal consequences which can flow from them (Finch and Mason, 1993: 93). The term commitment is meant to convey that much more is going on than simply ‘doing tasks’ (Finch and Mason, 1993: 93).

As Finch and Mason posit ‘commitments represent responsibilities accepted which have real and lasting consequences’ (1993: 94). Commitment is also considered to be a psychological attachment through which an individual intends to continue in a relationship indefinitely, which is integral to the success of any close relationship (Canary and Stafford, 1994; Rusbult, 1980). According to Johnson (1999), commitment emerges in the form of an individual expressing a personal desire, feeling obligated, or feeling forced, due to external social pressures, to remain involved in the relationship (in Rittenour, Myers and Brann, 2007: 169). Family members show one another how important they are in each other’s lives through commitment (Incerti, *et al.*, 2015: 30). Those that are not actively engaged in the support and treatment process felt isolated and displaced from their families (Flaherty and Donato-Hunt, 2012).

Sociologists typically use the concept of commitment when they are trying to account for the fact that people engage in lines of activity or action (Becker, 1960; Johnson, 1973; Selznick, 1949). In Johnson's terms, ‘personal commitment’ is ‘a strong personal dedication to a decision to carry out a line of action’ (1973: 395). Commitment has also an affective aspect (Zarah *et al.*, 2008: 1038). Women with family commitments often encounter conflicting interests between family care responsibilities, the need to increase household income, the desire to fulfil individual career aspirations and the need to maintain social contact with others (Doorewaard *et al.*, 2004 cited in Cooke, 2007: 49). Williams argues that the changing contours of family lives, which find increases in cohabitation, separation, divorce, lone parenthood, step-parenting, people living alone and more same-sex relationships, have signified for some a declining commitment of families to care (2012: 104). However, studies find that while the shape of commitment is changing – in that people are less dependent on ties of blood or marriage and their commitments extend across different households linked by dissolved marriages, reconstituted families, non-resident

partners, transnational kin and close friends – there is little evidence to support an idea of loss of commitment to care (Smart and Neale, 1999; Williams, 2004; 2012).

## **Morality**

I am discussing morality here because all of the previous values that I have discussed have moral dimensions. For example, Finch and Mason argue that the concept of commitment enables us to emphasize that the exchanges of goods and services are not reckoned purely in material terms, but also in moral terms (1993: 93). Where reciprocity is concerned, the idea that adult children owe their parents something in return can be viewed as a common sense moral belief – it is a belief ‘that is entrenched in our moral framework and has been passed on through generations’, it functions as a ‘basic premise in our moral practices’, and it ‘expresses a legitimate expectation within a particular moral practice’, that is, it is a norm ‘that goes without saying’ (Van den Hoven 2006: 44 in Stuifbergen and Van Delden, 2011: 64). The word duty is still used by moralists, despite a tendency to talk in terms of a good to be realised or of right of actions to be done and that morality involves the idea of something that ought to be done (Duncan, 1957: 65). Familial responsibility as a moral imperative have been well documented, particularly for women (Binney and Estes, 1988). Care is also a moral orientation (Williams, 2012: 106). Finch also argues that there is a level of morality when deciding whether to offer support to a relative or to ask for it (1989: 14). Ribbens Mccarthy *et al.*, identified a moral imperative that adults must take responsibility for children in their care (2003: 135). They have shown ways in their study on step-parenthood in which gender is also a significant feature of this moral imperative (Ribbens Mccarthy *et al.*, 2003: 135). Therefore, the theme of morality must be considered in the review as well.

So, morality is essentially a matter of doing, not of merely reflecting or thinking or observing, (Duncan, 1957: 58) – essentially a practice. Human agents are sufficiently similar that one moral code is appropriate for all (Leiter, 2015: 63). For Kant, morality is carried out in terms of the common idea of duty (Duncan, 1957: 69) which was discussed previously. Ribbens Mccarthy, Edwards and Gillies noted in their work that they tried to set aside their own feelings about moral acceptability – in so far as they are able – to try to understand what people were saying to them in their own terms (2000: 787). They have identified two ethics of care operating in people's narratives: a dominant one for dependent children, and a less common one for self (Ribbens Mccarthy, Edwards and Gillies, 2000: 799), though they did not discuss the care of the elderly. Adults should seek to take responsibility for children in their care (Ribbens Mccarthy, Edwards and Gillies, 2000: 799) though as it will be discussed in the empirical chapters, they also attach a moral obligation to the care of their elderly parent. As Finch (1989) points out, family lives are an area where people's moral identities are crucially at stake (in Ribbens Mccarthy, Edwards and Gillies, 2000: 785). This can lead to ambivalence.

## **Ambivalence**

I will now focus on the concept of ambivalence because it will be discussed in the final empirical chapter. Ambivalence can be defined as a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 12). Ambivalence is also a phenomenological reality, a universal human experience, a reflection of the dilemmas individuals face in close relationships (Bengston *et al.*, 2002: 568). Adopted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998:



12). The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 12). Ambivalence also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998: 13).

Ambivalence may be particularly implicated in relation to familial responsibility, given the strong moral imperative associated with the latter concept, and the potential for conflicts with other desired social goals (such as independence, choice and love) within complex familial relationships and structural constraints (Funk, 2015). Given this potential for ambivalence, there is greater need for comprehensive inductive examination of the process and complexities of interpreting familial responsibility (that is, beyond substantive description) (Funk, 2015). Some work in this regard suggests that meanings of familial responsibility are multidimensional, flexible, individualised, conditional and situation-dependent, and involve both moral and material aspects negotiated over time in families (Funk, 2015: 387-388).

Before concluding it is important to note that there are limitations around the idea of family practices. A limitation includes its inability to explain the complexity of 'race' in the family. I am discussing this here because this was an unexpected finding of the PhD which will be discussed in the first empirical chapter on racial issues. This chapter has put family practices into site of particular gender relations – which are referred to as gendered practices – but when family practices is put into a post-colonial setting it does not address the complexities of 'race', the importance of skin tone and its impact on family relationship (which will be discussed in the first empirical chapter). Family practices can be critiqued for being inward looking and ignoring context and this can be overcome when it is applied in a

post-colonial setting. Most post-colonial writers are men, so their focus on gender is minimal. When gender is taken into consideration the focus is mostly on the black women, and this is not relevant to the Seychelles, so the family practices approach addresses this. In bringing family practices in a post-colonial setting this makes it possible to overcome the weaknesses of both family practices and post-colonialism. Family practices do not address the complexities around 'race' and ethnic relations where the skin tone can influence family relations. Post-colonialism addresses this weakness. Post-colonialism does not address gender issues which have been found to exist in post-colonial Seychelles as much as the family practices approach do. Hence it is important, in this sense, to adopt a family practices approach in a post-colonial setting.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the sociology of family broadly. This is because there is a lack of resources on sociology of family in the Seychelles. Here, Morgan's (1996) work on family practices stressed the importance of 'doing' and 'action'. As it has been revealed in the section on family practices, there was no racial dimension to it – just a brief mention of ethnic practices – but no racial practices. This racial dimension was discussed in the previous chapter on post-colonialism. It will be discussed in the empirical chapters that family practices – ultimately the 'doing of family' is carried out through the support that family members provide to each other. Here support takes place between parents and their children as well as between grandparents and grandchildren. The provision of care is another family practices which remains gendered and evidence of this will be discussed in the analysis chapters. Providing support and care are things that families actively do – they are family practices. Alongside these practices, families also have particular values.

Family members believe that there are certain things that families are supposed to do. For them, these are family values. This include certain responsibilities, duties and obligations. They are considered as values because, for example someone might feel responsible for a parent but does not act upon it. A daughter's duty towards her father is to take care of him but she might not fulfil that duty. People have obligations towards a sick family member, but they are not obligated to provide help to him/her. Even though parents might have duties towards their children, feel responsible for them and are obligated to provide for them, not all parents act upon these values. Considering there are no available studies about family responsibilities in the Seychelles, certain empirical studies which have focused on other societies have been used. Another value includes being reciprocal, where the exchange of goods and services is seen as a two-way process. Being reciprocal is a way of showing commitment to family members especially those from the older generation in the form of intergenerational solidarity. All these values have moral dimensions, so this can lead to ambivalence. All these will be discussed in the Seychelles context in the empirical chapters. First, I will discuss the methodology used.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

When studying the family, it is important to consider several issues that can influence the research methods adopted. I had to take into consideration that the sociological research was novel as it has not been done in the Seychelles, my home country, so my position as an insider proved helpful. I had to consider issues around consent, for example – how to get written consent from a people who views documents that require a signature with distrust. Then I had to consider how to recruit people considering my shy disposition and awkwardness around strangers. I had to consider the types of questions that could be asked so as not to appear too intrusive into people's personal lives. But first, I had to consider the type of research methods that would answer the questions that I wanted to ask. So, this chapter discusses the methodological underpinnings of the study, the method used, and the process of analysis. As I used some anecdotes in my project anecdotes are discussed, followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations. As I carried out a study on my own people and I share a culture with them, my positionality as an insider is discussed. The chapter finally concludes that studying the family is not an easy task but is still a worthwhile one.

#### **The aim of qualitative research**

The main objective of my research was to explore family responsibilities, duties and obligations in the Seychelles and how this varies for different genders and generations.

Mason (2007) argues that ‘qualitative research offers a distinctive order of knowledge that social science needs if it is going to offer meaningful understandings of the social world’. To achieve the objective of my project I had to carry out the research qualitatively. Considering my project deals specifically with the family, I took into consideration that qualitative methods are especially valuable for family researchers because ‘the focus is not on identifying structural or demographic trends in families, but rather on the processes by which families create, sustain, and discuss their own family realities’ (Daly, 1984: 4). It is hence imperative to remember that families are groups of individuals and the emphasis on the holistic understanding makes qualitative methods the ideal approach to use when studying families (Greenstein, 2001; Mason and Dale, 2011).

Qualitative research is often associated with words. It adopts often an interpretive approach. Sample size is often smaller than those being used for quantitative research. The objective is not to produce a sample that is representative and can be generalizable to the wider population, but one that is strong in validity, hence reflecting social reality. Its main strength is its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere (Silverman, 2006: 43). Qualitative research can produce vast amounts of data (Pope, Zieland, and Mays, 2000: 114) and this is often useful when the research is novel. Punch also argues that a hallmark of qualitative research is that it is naturalistic – that it tends to study people and groups in their natural settings (1998: 148-149).

Qualitative research is most commonly associated with certain schools which falls broadly within the interpretivist sociological tradition (Mason, 1996; 2002). As Weber argues, an interpretive epistemological position requires *verstehen*, and this can be achieved through qualitative methodology (Bryman, 2008; 2012). Weber defines sociology as a ‘science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action’ (Weber, 1968: 2

quoted in Crotty, 1998: 69). The interpretivist epistemology is important to my research as it is used to understand the interactions between family members in a socio-cultural context. Greenstein argues that ‘the researcher’s epistemological orientation affects the topics studied, the types of questions asked, and the methods employed to answer those questions’ (2001: 98).

However, qualitative research does have some limitations. Qualitative studies provide readers with little more than brief, persuasive data extracts (Silverman, 2006). The reliability of the interpretation of transcripts may be gravely weakened by a failure to note apparently trivial, but often crucial, pauses, overlaps or body movements (Silverman, 2006: 46). However, some of these issues can be overcome by using tape recorders. Furthermore, the positivist position sees no difference between the natural and social worlds, reliable measures of social life are only needed by such positivists (Silverman, 2006). Conversely, once we treat social reality as always in flux then it makes no sense to worry about whether our research instruments measure accurately (Silverman, 2006: 46-47).

## **Research Methods**

### Design

The research adopted a cross-sectional design. Data is collected simultaneously as individuals are responding to the same questions and the answers are supplied at essentially the same time (Bryman, 2008; 2012). In most instances, a credible research design is one that maximizes validity – it provides a clear explanation of the phenomenon under study and controls all plausible biases or confounds that could cloud or distort the research findings (Bickman and Rog, 2009: 12). De Vaus further asserts that in the standard cross-sectional

design, data are collected at one point of time, as such the cross-sectional design can only measure differences between groups (2001: 170). These groups comprised of young and older adults and men and women who made up the sample.

### Sampling

Samples for qualitative investigations tend to be small and the aim of the qualitative approach is to understand complex human issues, which is more important than the generalizability of results (Greenstein, 2001; Marshall, 1996). So, the aim was not to produce a representative sample but to end up with a sample which would help to understand what people identify as familial responsibilities, duties and obligations, whether obligations are negotiated, and how commitment is developed and displayed. I also wanted to explore the different types of family structures that the participants grew up in and are currently living in right now. A group of people who might have been involved in such processes at some stage was targeted. People who has been divorced or separated, single ones and those who are married, or cohabiting were selected. How they were targeted and how some were rejected will be discussed in the section about the recruitment process.

Mason argues that the act of focusing through sampling is strategic as well as practical (2002: 121) so the sampling technique used was non-probability and the type of non-probability sampling procedures were purposive and snowballing. Non-probability sampling is adequate because in ‘exploratory or qualitative research, researchers are typically not concerned with generalising to a population’ (Greenstein, 2001: 116) and because the sample is too small. The first type of non-probability sampling procedure used was purposive sampling. Nonprobability samples allow human judgements, either purposefully or unintentionally, to influence which individuals or units are selected for a

study (Henry, 1990: 78). The second type used was snowballing. This is mostly used to study groups or individuals that are hard to identify or locate. Snowballing was not originally a sampling type to be used, but people offered to ask around for prospective participants and this made it possible for me to achieve the required sample size that I was aiming for and to get access to those who meet the sample characteristics. For example, after one interview an older man asked me if he could tell his friend about the research and he would call me and provide all the details. Another older man called a colleague just after our interview and his colleague agreed to participate and I met him later during the day to be interviewed. A young woman who was not a participant phoned me and asked me if her father could take part in the research. A young man told one of his friends who phoned me later in the week and arranged to be interviewed the following week. I doubt if I would have been able to achieve the required sample size if it was not for participants and non-participants' help with snowballing.

### Sample characteristics

The sample was made up of four types of groups. The first one was made up of young adult women aged 16 to 30, who have at least one parent still alive. The second one comprised of young adult men aged 16 to 30, who have at least one parent still alive. These two groups were young adults who are independent. Independent youth was defined as persons aged over 16 and less than 30 (which is recognised as the upper age limit for youth in the Seychelles) who are not engaged in compulsory education. The third group was made up of older adult women who are parents aged between the ages of 40 and 60 and they have children below the age of 30. The fourth group was made up of older adult men who are parents aged between the ages of 40 and 60 and they have children below the age of 30. The



two latter groups must have at least one child who is non-dependent. The sample was comprised of ten individuals in each group, ending up with forty individuals in total. The sample was made up of mixed genders as Finch and Mason noted that previous work on family relationships has been criticised because researchers have interviewed just one person from each family – usually a woman (1993: 13). I managed to end up with the sample that I was opting for: ten young women, ten young men, ten older women and ten older men.

Obviously, all the older adults have children and at least one of their children was a young independent adult below the age of 30. In fact, four out of the older women have children who are all young independent adults and three of them are grandparents. In the case of the older adult men six of them have children who are all young independent adults though only one is a grandparent. Where the younger women are concerned six of them are mothers. Only two of the younger men are fathers.

Except for one older woman, all the older adults are working either in full time work or own their own business. Most of the younger adults are working full time and a few are still studying at university. Some of them still live at home and some of them are married/cohabiting and have children. The parents of most of them have separated and they have or had at least one step-parent. In the case of the older generation half of the women are married, and six of the men are still married to the mother of their children. Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of the sample (see appendix 2 page 282). Appendix 3 on pages 306 to 324 contain pen portraits of all the participants. All the names are pseudonyms.

It is important to note that the participants came from different socio-economic backgrounds. This is because I wanted the views of people from different economic backgrounds who might experience family life differently. Mostly the older participants mentioned their economic situation. Table 1 (see appendix 2 page 282) also illustrates the

socio-economic backgrounds of the participants. A few participants considered themselves to be economically stable – this included Hendrika, Lorraine and Maria amongst the older women and Cyril, Dominic, Jaques, Pierre, Dean, and Ian amongst the older men.

A few of the older participants considered themselves to be struggling financially. They were Olivia, Gemma, Alice, Jane and Suzy amongst the older women and amongst the older men, Matthew and Sam. The younger generation did not focus on their economic situation. It must be noted that forty percent of the younger women are students and are relying on their parents financially, and thirty percent of the younger men are students, who are relying on their parents financially. Five out of the ten young women are still living in the family home. Eight out of the ten young men are still living in the family home. Only Evans mentioned how he was struggling financially amongst the young cohort.

One of the participants was a friend and this participant was eager to take part in the research. Upon initial contact with the participant, the participant was informed about the ethical implications and how our closeness carries other ethical considerations, but the participant advised that these implications were known to him/her. Considering this participant has the same educational background as me, she was well-versed in the ethical implications that research carries. The participant in fact informed me that our closeness ensures that there is an additional element of trust and this was proven in the participant's willingness to divulge certain information during the interview that were new to me and what could describe as being taboo in the Seychelles.

### The recruitment process

My original plan was to recruit the sample through the media. Cultural considerations were taken into account as the Seychelles is a small country and the media is usually the main way of getting access to people interested in taking part in research projects. I contacted the marketing director of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) before my departure from UK to Seychelles, to prepare an advert which was to be advertised upon my arrival. I was hoping to have this advert being advertised before the 8 o'clock local Creole news which, according to anecdotal evidence, is watched by most Seychellois. When I arrived in the Seychelles I contacted the SBC and I heard from them a couple of days later. They had a special rate for students, but their special rate was too expensive. As it was early days, I placed my Facebook advert on my Facebook wall. I also got into contact with the administrator of a Facebook group, known as 'Gossip Corner', which at the time of the study had more than fifteen thousand members. I asked him if he can pin a post on the group page to advertise the research. Those interested were given an email address which was used for the purpose of the research, as well as a phone number. Those who did respond did not have their names revealed on the group page and hence their confidentiality was protected.

To get access to those who might not respond to the media, I tried to get access to prospective participants through gatekeepers who were post-secondary school principals. That proved a success in only one case. Fortunately, the advert I placed on Facebook attracted many prospective participants, especially the younger adults. Some of them were eager to take part in the research whilst others, it was their parents who were interested in participating. They were essentially acting as 'snowballers'. One week later, I had three interviews planned – two in town and one in Anse Royale, a district in the south of Mahé. What was even more beneficial for me was that the participants wanted to do the interview

in English and not in Creole, which is our main national language. When participants wanted to do the interview in English rather than in Creole, this was beneficial as there was no need for translation. Not needing to translate meant that less time was spent on transcription. Furthermore, some people, especially the younger generation claimed that they could express themselves better when they speak in English.

After the interviews, the participants promised that they would snowball for me. My fourth interview took place at the airport where a young adult (who was not participating) informed me that her father was eager to take part in the research. The father then made it possible for me to get in contact with one of his colleagues, who was interested in participating. Through Facebook and mainly snowballing I managed to get in contact with many participants. I also got in communication with acquaintances of my parents who were in their age range, who got me in contact with other parents of the same age range. So, ultimately my best recruitment process was snowballing.

I gradually became more confident, where I would approach prospective participants, (something I would not have been able to do before) asking them if they would like to take part in the research, and I was rarely given a direct 'no'. In fact, I was told only *once* a straight 'no'. I approached a school vice principal who has grown up children from a previous relationship and he let me down gently. He told me he barely knew his kids, so he would be of no help. I had to reject one participant because when we met he told me that he was 32 years old, hence he was over the age limit of 30. He told me he misunderstood the age requirements, but he would contact peers who are younger than him. He kept to his word and one of his peers contacted me soon after and he met the sample requirements. I also had to reject those who contacted me after I have interviewed all the forty participants and I had to let them down gently. The recruitment process proved so easy. that originally, I have

targeted to complete fieldwork in five months and I managed to complete in four months. When I was done with the final interview I was still receiving calls from prospective participants who were eager to take part in the research, but I had to let them down gently. A few of them informed me they would be keen to take part in any future research that I might carry out. I also made sure I did not keep the interested participants waiting too long to carry out the interviews.

I recruited only from the main island of Mahé, the biggest and most populated island. This is because I get seasick and the only way to get access to the other islands is by boat, except for Praslin, the second island, which also has a small airport. However, flight fare is considerably expensive and often flights are fully booked by the tourists. To avoid this, I decided not to recruit from the other islands. One of my participants originally came from Praslin and is now living on Mahé. Once I contacted a prospective participant, we agreed to meet on a certain day, at a certain place, at a specified time, to carry out the interview, which was semi-structured.

### The use of semi-structured interviews

This section discusses why I used semi-structured interviews. Burgess calls qualitative interviewing ‘conversations with a purpose’ (1984: 102). Considering my research is to study processes within families, semi-structured interviewing techniques are more appropriate to uncovering such dynamics (Finch and Mason, 1993; Greenstein, 2001). Byrne argues that qualitative interviewing has been ‘particularly attractive to researchers who want to explore voices and experiences which they believe have been ignored, misrepresented or suppressed in the past’ (2004: 182 quoted in Silverman, 2006: 114). The interviews focused principally upon people’s own families where participants were asked to

talk about relationships in their own families, who they considered as family, the kind of help, support and assistance which they and others have experienced.

Semi-structured interviews are those which are between in-depth and structured interviews, where questions are normally specified, but the interviewer is freer to probe beyond the answers in a manner which would appear prejudicial to the aims of standardization and comparability (May, 2001: 123). The interviewer can seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given enabling the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee (May, 2001: 123). This allows people to answer more on their own terms but still provide a greater structure for comparability (May, 2001: 123).

Using semi-structured interviews proved to be the best method for several reasons. First, the interviews made it easier for me to build rapport with the participants, so much so that, even after the interview was done, the participants wanted to keep on talking about certain issues that were out of context, but they were things that they wanted to talk about. Second, interviewing participants on issues that have to do with their family made them open up about things they feel should be addressed. This include issues which have to do with the care of the elderly, for example, where some participants felt that there should be more support from the government to ensure that family is the one who takes care of the elderly but that this can be made possible with the help of the state. Finally, taking part in the research proved to be reflective for some participants. This is the case, as some of them informed me upon the completion of the interview, how they felt better after talking, especially those who were involved in the care of their ageing parent/s. They reflected, for example, how taking care of the ageing people should remain a family duty and not one

taken by the state. This will be discussed in more detail in the empirical chapters. Alongside the semi-structured interviews, I also used three vignettes.

### The use of vignettes

The empirical study of beliefs, values and norms has always posed some of the most methodological problems for sociology (Finch, 1987: 105). A way to get around this is using vignettes. Many researchers have opted to use vignettes (Brauer *et al.*, 2009; Gourlay *et al.*, 2014; Jenkins, *et al.*, 2010; Lapatin *et al.*, 2012; Schoenberg and Ravdal, 2000; Sleed *et al.*, 2002; Torres, 2009; Wainwright *et al.*, 2010). The three vignettes I used were based on key themes which were central to the research. The first vignette concerned the themes of duty, obligation and care. The second vignette concerned the themes of commitment and reciprocity and the final one concerned finances. I wanted to know what the participants' values were, with regards to certain situations a person found himself or herself in. Finch and Mason 'were particularly concerned to keep a clear distinction between beliefs and actions and not to make the common mistake of assuming that actions can be 'read off' from beliefs,' (1993: 14). I was aware that what people might say from a hypothetical situation outlined on a vignette might not be the case in practice. I let the participants themselves reflect on what they would do if they were going through this dilemma, as during some interviews some participants mentioned that this is what they would do themselves, in practice – and I made a note of that.

Vignettes were not only used to find out what were people's beliefs but as a starting point to have them open up about their actions. I bore in mind Finch's (1987: 113) caution which states that 'asking about what a third party 'ought' to do in a given situation is not the same thing as asking respondents what they themselves think they ought to do' (quoted in

Barter and Renold, 1999). It must be noted however that many of the participants commented 'if I was in her place' when faced with a certain vignette, essentially putting themselves into the shoes of the person facing a certain dilemma. This was raised by O'Dell *et al.* (2012) who argue that researchers face the problem of interpreting responses to vignettes when participants shift between discussing the vignettes as themselves, commenting on what 'ought' to happen.

The three vignettes were derived from Finch and Mason's vignettes, but I redesigned them to fit within the Seychelles' context. Furthermore, when I redesigned these vignettes, I wanted to capture the different values of the women and the men, and if possible of the younger and older generation. The first vignette has to do with a son who finds himself in a difficult situation. The second vignette has to do with an ex-daughter-in-law whose ex-mother-in-law fell ill. These two vignettes clearly demonstrated the differences between the way the men and women empathize. Considering I wanted to capture their values and then compare between the generations and genders I made sure that I redesigned these vignettes to be able to capture this. The vignettes can be found in detail in the appendix on page 285.

When I was developing the second vignette I decided to choose the character of a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law and this has to do with the volatile relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in the Seychelles. Here anecdotes proved very useful. Furthermore, when I redesigned the third vignette I wanted to see what the participants' values were, with regards to parents helping their adult children financially, and the younger generation's values regarding a young couple needing financial help and how they think the young couple should approach this dilemma. Essentially, as would be discussed in the empirical chapters, these vignettes proved very useful to study the values of the participants and using them was a useful way in the collection of data.



### Data collection

Most of the interviews occurred at a scheduled time, sometimes during working hours or lunch breaks, or after work and during the weekend. Most of them took place after work and during the weekends – on Saturdays, and never on a Sunday. I knew I had to accommodate my participants by scheduling a time that works for them. My insider status became an asset as the participants felt that I would understand them considering we share the same cultural background.

Fieldwork took place from February 2015 till June 2015. The location was agreed by the participant and me upon initial contact though the participants were the ones who ultimately chose the location. Locations included participants' home, an office at a school, the national library, the office of some participants, university and the beach. These locations were places where the participants felt they can open up, were comfortable and offered a level of privacy. Interviews taken place at participants' home were carried out under the veranda.

Individuals were given the information sheet and consent was sought. The information sheet was either in Creole or English, as were the consent questions depending on which language the participant chose. I had interview schedules that were both in Creole and English, so that the participants could choose which language they want to be interviewed in. Even though I was hoping that the interviews would be carried out mostly in English, at no point did I coerce the participants to choose the English language. I informed them that it was up to them which language they preferred to use. In fact, most of the young people hinted before the beginning of going through the consent, how they hoped that the interview would be done in English as they claimed that this is the language they feel they can express themselves. So, in the end twenty-seven of the interviews were carried out in

English. Thirteen of the interviews were carried out in Creole. Out of the thirteen participants, two of them were young women, one was a young man, seven were older women and three were older men. One of the older men could not read so I had to read the information sheet to him in Creole.

All the interviews were recorded on a tape recorder which made it easy for the participants to open up and avoid suspicion on the part of the participants which can be caused by the use of notebooks (Holmes, 1998). The recording of the interviews also made it possible to maintain eye contact with the participant, so I could see any sign of distress and observe body movements like deep sighs. I was able to observe this in certain cases, for example, in the case of one participant when she was talking about the care of her elderly mother. Maintaining eye contact also made it easy to see when a participant was getting emotional and teary eyed when they were talking about certain experiences they have gone through, such as the death of a loved one, being abused, being cheated on by a spouse and conflicts between certain relatives. Each time this happened, I was able to react quickly and ask the participant if they wanted to take a break, or if they wanted to end the interview. At no point, did any of the participants who were emotional want to end the interview, though two of them did take a break from the interview to cry and regain their composure. Some of the time I ended up teary eyed as well especially if the participant was crying over the death of a grandmother, especially soon after the death of my own grandmother. I also ended up teary eyed because I am a sympathetic crier.

Most participants recruited came from different families. I did recruit participants from the same family. This included a mother and her two daughters. They were interviewed separately and on the same day. This is because I did not want them to talk about any of the questions when they meet at home, considering two of them still live in the same household.

Any potentially disclosed information about their relationship was removed from the interview transcripts. I also spoke to a mother and her daughter and again did the interview on the same day. I also spoke to a mother and son and to two brothers. I felt this was important to me for ethical purposes. I did not want the relative who was yet to be interviewed to ask the other one, for example, what kinds of questions were asked or discussed the vignettes. So, I made sure I interviewed all relatives on the same day, even if doing two or three interviews in one day was challenging and exhausting.

I wish to also stress how small the Seychelles is and how the cliché ‘it’s a small world’ applies to the Seychelles. I found out during analysis that two of my participants were cousins. They had different surnames and one was significantly older than the other one. When analysing their data, both have an uncle who was sick and needed people to help on the farm, and both mentioned how the uncle is selfish. One spoke about her sister who had trouble with her in-laws and had to move with a relative. The other one spoke about her cousin who had problems with the in-laws and she invited that cousin to live with her. So, this sister and this cousin was the same person. I also found out that another two of my participants were related. They were aunt and niece. I made that link because the niece mentioned her aunt’s name and since she knew that I used to be a lecturer and her aunt was well-known at the Ministry of Education, she mentioned this to me, asking me if I knew her aunt. I did, and I told her yes but did not reveal to her that I have already interviewed her aunt. Another participant mentioned the name of his sister and I was surprised because his sister was one of my mother’s close friends. They looked nothing alike, as the brother was blond with blue eyes and the sister was dark-skinned. They had different surnames as they did not have the same father. This is a reflection on just how small Seychelles is and how ethnically diverse as well.

### Transcription and translation

Transcription was done during gaps between the interviews and when I returned to the UK. Transcription was done in English instead of in Creole. This was advantageous in two ways. One, is that a shorter amount of time was spent and two, is that I do not particular write Creole well, like most of the people in my country, as we are educated mostly using the English language. The interviews which were carried out in English made it easier for transcription and I spent less time on them compared to those carried out in Creole. Before leaving the Seychelles, I received help from two local linguists who helped me translate some difficult words. In some cases, we had to contact some older people as some words said by the older participants were words that are not being used by the younger generation and only the older generation could give us a definition of such words so that we were able to translate and keep them within context. I copied the transcribed data into a folder labelled 'analysis' so that when I was analysing the data the original transcriptions were left untouched.

Transcription takes a lot of time and effort to do and it is an interpretive process (Gibbs, 2007: 10). It is a change of medium and that introduces issues of accuracy, fidelity and interpretation (Gibbs, 2007: 11). Gibbs argues that it is important to go back to the recording to check the interpretations based on the transcript as a corrective measure (2007: 11). He stresses that 'doing the transcript yourself is a good way to become familiar with the content and to start analysing' (Gibbs, 2007: 15) and I found myself making notes as I was transcribing, especially when a certain theme came up. As Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor argue 'familiarisation is a crucial activity at the start of analysis' (2003: 221).

## Data analysis

It has been argued that a major concern with qualitative analysis is to describe what is happening, to answer the question 'what is going on here' (Gibbs, 2007: 4). The data was classified according to the themes of duty, obligations, commitment and responsibilities and some according to the questions asked. When data is analysed by theme, it is called thematic analysis (Dawson, 2009: 119). A common procedure in the analysis of qualitative data is the identification of key themes, concepts or categories (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2003: 202). That was one of the stances I took. This stage involved generating a set of themes and concepts according to which the data are labelled, sorted and synthesised (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2003: 214). Data management was coded manually.

Alongside thematic analysis I used comparative analysis. Data from different people is compared through a continuous process (Dawson, 2009: 120). Considering I am looking at the views of both different genders and different generations I also had to use this type of analysis. As Dawson (2009) argues, 'comparative and thematic analyses are often used in the same project', with the researcher moving between transcripts, notes and the literature, which was something that I did. I also made sure that no material was dismissed as irrelevant 'just because its inclusion is not immediately clear. It may well be that issues that make little sense at this early stage of analysis become vital in the later interpretative stages of analysis' (Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor, 2003: 229). This had to do with the issue of anecdotes, which were important sources of data as well.

## **The use of anecdotes in novel research**

When carrying out qualitative research there is the problem of 'anecdotalism', which is revealed in the way in which research reports sometimes appeal to a few telling 'examples' of some apparent phenomenon without any attempt to analyse less clear (or even contradictory) data (Silverman, 2006). I used a few anecdotes in my findings and I think they bring something extra to the data even though Silverman argues that the problem of 'anecdotalism' questions the validity of such qualitative research (2006: 47). Anecdotes can include narratives of the 'good old days' where things were considered as different and better, which might not necessarily be true. Schostak (2006) argues that without the anecdote, there can be no beginning nor an end, nor anything to explain or represent.

Schostak argues that the anecdote is not real data, the data of scientific procedure (2006: 144) but that doesn't necessarily mean it is not seen as something real to the individual talking about it or relating to it. For example, when a participant talks about the 'good old days', though it might not have necessarily been good old days, but for the participant it has been, and the feeling and emotions attached to this anecdote is as important to the participant as what is actually happening right now. This should not be ignored. Each anecdote told, formally structures its content into the hardness of a lived reality (Schostak, 2006: 144) – 'that is the way it was', or 'this is what happened to me' and therefore it makes sense to use certain anecdotes at times, especially with a research that is novel. Thus, it can be argued that far from anecdotes being a weak form of 'evidence' they provide the route into underlying structures and processes constructed by individuals (Schostak, 2006: 144-145). There are anecdotes that can explain why people behave in particular ways. Through the collection and analysis of anecdotes the narrative frameworks through which every day and

professional experience and action is organised can be studied (Schostak, 2006: 145). So, anecdotes can be integral to qualitative research.

Anecdotes proved important to me in some cases. One case had to do with getting consent. I noted before the start of fieldwork, that I was expecting a lot of people to be surprised when I would give them consent forms to give verbal consent to and when I would inform them that their participation is voluntary. This was the case for several participants. Several of them were very surprised when I asked them for their consent. Some went as far as to ask me why do I need to record their consent when they have already told me ‘yes – they are willing to take part’. A few noted ‘strange university rules they have over there’. The other anecdote had to do with the design of two of my vignettes. It is important to note that I am not attempting to use anecdotes as evidence. I am using them to describe the culture of the Seychelles and the reasons behind the way certain things are done in the Seychelles.

### **Ethical considerations**

Several considerations are needed to be taken into account when carrying out research. Ethical consideration is one of them. Ethical concerns should be involved in *every* aspect of design (Maxwell, 2009: 216). Denscombe argues that the types of research that require ethical approval are those that involve primary data collection from human beings, which includes using methods such as interviews where people are invited to provide information (2012: 122). Ethical considerations were informed by Keele Ethics Committee, as well as the British Sociological Association (BSA). The rights of human research participants can be defined in three broad areas: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (Greenstein, 2001: 178).

## Consent

Principle 1 of The Nuremberg Code proclaims that ‘the voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential’ (Kimmel 2007: 28). Ethics require that consent should be provided by participants, and this consent should be *informed* (Denscombe, 2012; Heath *et al.*, 2007; Lewis and Lindsay; 2000). Participants wishing to take part were informed that participation is voluntary. Even though Denscombe (2010) asserts that preferably consent should be given in written form, culture needs to be taken into consideration. Hence verbal consent was requested, which was recorded. In the Seychelles, it is quite common for people to associate written consent forms with bureaucracy and tend to treat them with substantial scepticism, which is why verbal consent was preferred and used. Personal communication with Dr Liam Campling (PhD), lecturer at Queen Mary University of London, who has carried out research in the Seychelles, has advised that consent is best obtained verbally. Verbal consent was gained before the interview. I went through all the points on the consent form with the participants at the beginning of the interviews. I clarified any issues raised by the participants, which were few. I gained both informed consent for taking part in the study as well as for the use of the participants’ quotes. The consents were recorded, and each consent was stored in a separate audio file on a password protected computer. A password protected computer was used to ensure the participants’ anonymity.

## Anonymity

Anonymity is that no identifying information should be retained in the researcher’s files, following completion of data collection (Greenstein, 2001: 179). To protect the anonymity of any individual who may have certain characteristics that can be easily



identified, the individual's district and island he or she comes from was changed as well. One of the participants had a profession which made it easy for others to identify him, considering he is the only Seychellois person with that profession, so in the end I opted to keep the participants' profession out of any analysed data. As mentioned previously in the section on sample characteristics one of the participants was known to me. This participant's anonymity was ensured just like the other participants.

Voice recordings were removed from the audio recorder and stored on a password protected file on my personal computer and then on the university's computer. I was the only one who had access to the voice recordings. In the dissemination of the research findings data were anonymised and pseudonyms were used. Bryman (2008: 124) argues that raising issues about ensuring anonymity in relation to recording of information and the maintenance of the record of the data relates to all methods of social research. De Vaus states that in some respects cross-sectional design can minimize some of the ethical problems that can arise with other designs, and since no tracking of participants is required it is much easier to ensure anonymity (2001: 192). He believes that there is no need to keep lists of names and this essentially protects participants' anonymity and ensures confidentiality (De Vaus, 2001).

### Confidentiality

Participants were made aware that data gathered during interviews would be treated as confidential by the researcher and would be used only for the purpose of the research and for future publications – if they agree to it, which they all did. All personal data remained confidential and data gathered were anonymised before any publications. Participants were given pseudonyms and any identifying details were changed before the data was analysed. Additional measures to preserve anonymity were taken such as by changing characteristics

or disclosed events. For members from the same family who took part they were interviewed separately, and potentially disclosed information were removed from the interview transcripts.

### **Being an insider**

I considered myself as an insider when I was carrying out fieldwork in the Seychelles. This was so because ‘insiders’ are individuals who have a place in the social group being studied before the start of the investigation (Moore, 2012: 11). Furthermore, Banks’ (1998) definition of insiderness is one where one’s positionality is based on the community in which one was socialized. As I am a Seychellois, who was socialised in the same community as the participants who took part in the research, I could be considered as an insider. As Rose (1997) argues, researchers are not objective observers – rather they are subject to the forces of age, class, ethnicity and gender. Hence, I am also given the position of an ‘insider’ (Barker and Smith, 2001) as a woman, and as a Seychellois, who was raised up in a family, albeit a very different one compared to most of the participants and who now has a family of her own. Holmes (1998) noted that insiders have particular motives, biases and theoretical perspectives which ultimately affect research, its interpretation and dissemination. Hence, as a social scientist I felt that it was important to be reflective about my positionality as an insider. Being reflective was important because my status as an insider has had some effect on the fieldwork, the analysis process and the findings.

As an insider I already have knowledge of my community and culture and I can be perceived by Seychellois within the community as a ‘legitimate community member who can speak with authority about it’ (Banks, 1998: 8). As Merriam *et al.*, (2001) noted, the more one is like the participants in terms of culture, gender, race, socio-economic class and

so on, the more it is assumed that access will be granted, meanings shared, and validity of findings assured. For example, because I can speak Creole, this made it possible for me to get access to participants who either could not speak English or preferred to speak in Creole. An outsider who did not speak nor understand the language would not have been able to get access to such participants, especially those who are on a lower socio-economic position and their social reality is as important as other members of the society. As an insider, I know most of the local sayings which made it easier for me to link certain sayings with experiences that some participants have gone through. For example, I can relate to why certain racial slurs have become normalised in the Seychelles. This proved to be very helpful during the analysis process. I understand the implication behind the local saying 'a daughter is better than a son'. It would have been difficult for an outsider to understand the meanings behind certain local proverbs, let alone know about these sayings.

A further advantage of being an insider is to do with accessing the field more quickly (see Chavez, 2008; Kondo, 1986; Sherif, 2001). I knew who to talk to and how to recruit people and this proved such a success that I managed to gain access to the sample size that I was hoping to recruit. This made it possible for me to complete field work earlier than anticipated. Because of my insider status I was also aware that the only way I would get the participants' consent to take part in the research, was if consent was requested verbally. My insider status made it possible for me to understand people's scepticism and reluctance to sign documents to give written consent. During field work I also found that the familiarity I have with the community and people made it easier to create instant access and rapport (De Andrade, 2000; DeLyser, 2001; Merriam *et al.*, 2001; Nakhleh, 1981; Sherif, 2001; Stephenson and Greer, 1981). Many participants were willing to divulge information which could be considered as sensitive or even taboo. Furthermore, some participants commented that they could open to me, a Seychellois, because I understand the importance of certain

family practices and rituals, which an outsider would not comprehend, which might even be considered as strange. As a woman, many of the female participants felt that I would understand what it means to be a Seychellois woman. As a mother, many of the participants who were parents felt that I would understand what it means to be a parent. As an insider I was able to understand the cognitive, emotional, and/or psychological precepts of participants as well as possess a more profound knowledge of the historical and practical happenings of the field (Chavez, 2008: 481).

Other scholars have found, familiarity with the group also ethically bound them to participants in ways perhaps not felt by outsiders (Brayboy and Deyhle, 2000). For example, during the analysis process I found out that some participants have gone through racism from close family members, which was something I have gone through. Their experiences were discussed in the findings. During the dissemination process, I was able to reflect on this and finally put to rest my animosity towards those who were racist towards me. Furthermore, my closeness and familiarity to the sample group provided a nuanced and unique insight about underrepresented and colonized groups to which we belonged (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). At the same time, my insiderness did not prevent complications in asserting my researcher role (Baca Zinn, 1979; Brayboy and Deyhle, 2000; Kusow, 2003; Zavella, 1996 in Chavez, 2008). For example, a couple of times I was asked about my personal opinion during an interview. I was able to tell the participants that this research was about their experiences and not mine. Furthermore, as an insider, my friend who took part in the research spoke about issues which could be considered as very personal and she revealed to me that this was the case because there already was an element of trust between the two of us. She knew that her anonymity would be protected especially during the dissemination process.

I am aware that being an insider carry certain disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages I was reflective about was that of bias. As an insider there was the possibility of the experience I share with participants could be manifested as a rose-coloured observational lens (Chavez, 2008). This did not prove to be the case. During the analysis stage I found out that, compared to most of the participants, I was raised in a different family situation. Most of the participants were brought up by one or two parents but I was brought up by my grandmother, even though my mother was still alive, and she was in a new relationship with my then step-father. Unlike most of the participants I do not know the identity of my biological father. Interviewing male participants did not pose any issues in terms of our different genders, though I must note that when interviewing those of the same gender, there was a lot of 'as you know' or 'you know what it's like', when the women were answering certain questions especially those that deal specifically with gender issues. A further disadvantage the insider status can also have is the counter-effect regarding reciprocity (Baca Zinn, 1979; Chavez, 2008). At no point did any of my participants expect anything from me in return, so I did not face this dilemma.

Like other insiders (see Baca Zinn, 1979; Banks, 1998; Chavez, 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984; Paredes, 1978) I can contend that we have unique methodological advantages in the research process. As Chavez argues qualitative researchers, outsiders or insiders, cannot be assured that their observations, interpretations, and representations are not affected by their various identities or positionalities (2008: 475). I did not ignore my own experience, my own intuitions and hunches (De Vaus, 2001: 23) when carrying out research, 'as in the end all explanations start with hunches that spring from individuals who have ideas and observe things around them' (De Vaus, 2001: 23). I feel that the fieldwork, the analysis process and writing about the findings have all made me mature not just as a researcher, but as a family member and as a feminist. Before carrying out this research I did not consider

myself as a feminist, and I carried the assumption that women in the Seychelles were equal to the men, but I have discovered that this is not the case at all. Women in the Seychelles, including me, are all oppressed in one way or another, and I was able to finally open my eyes to this reality because of my position as an insider, though it can be argued that being an insider might be one of the problems with studying the family.

### **The problem with studying families**

Studying the family has been identified as one of the hardest areas to research (Greenstein, 2001). This makes studying family special considering the qualms a researcher has to go through. Greenstein gives an insight of all the differences and problems between research on families and social and behavioural research in general (2001: 8). Greenstein identifies five main issues which are – that families are systems of individuals; defining family is problematic; family members occupy multiple roles and statuses simultaneously; much family behaviour is private and hidden; and we all have preconceptions about families and family life (2001: 8). I will hence discuss here how did this play out for me.

A problem with studying the family is that there is no agreed definition of what exactly the family is (Cheal, 2008; Greenstein, 2001; Ribbens McCarthy *et al.*, 2012) and ‘defining family has been a controversial topic’ (Cheal, 2008: 1). Since I am adopting a family practices approach I am more interested in what the family do. Morgan (1996) developed the concept of ‘family practices’ to highlight how ‘family’ is not a strategic category or structure defined by residence, blood ties and the legal system. Rather, because individuals live in a complex and fluid society, family has to be actively created by its members and family is something that individuals ‘do’ rather than something that people ‘are’ (Morgan, 1996, 2011). In the Seychelles, this is already problematic as anyone related

to anyone is considered as family. However, this problem of definition was overcome because the participants have their own idea on who they consider as family, which is why at no point in the thesis did I give a definition of the family. As Ribbens McCarthy *et al.* argue what is seen as new about diversity and change in modern family lives, ‘may in fact be a recognition of the variable and diverse *meanings*’ that are given to the term ‘family’ (2012: 8).

Gelles points out that ‘families are made up of individuals occupying multiple statuses and enacting multiple roles’ (1978: 408). Each member of the family is simultaneously a potential parent, sibling, employee, spouse, son, daughter (Greenstein, 2001: 10). When data is collected about a member of a family, there is a need to be sensitive to the fact that the kinds of responses we get may depend on which roles and statuses an individual is occupying at the time of the interview (Greenstein, 2001: 10). Interviewing a mother in the presence of her child might produce very different results from those we might obtain by interviewing the same mother in the presence of her own mother, for example. This problem was overcome as I interviewed mainly those who were not related and during all the interviews only the participant and I were present. Furthermore, it was the participants themselves who chose to focus on their role as a mother, a father, as a daughter, a son. As the project was more about vertical relationships and the questions were shaped in such a way that the focus was more on these types of relationship, participants did not have to talk a lot about their relationship with their spouse.

Another problem of studying families is the fact that it occupies the private sphere, what is known as *backstage behaviour*, hidden from public view (Greenstein, 2001: 10). Greenstein notes that important behaviours like child abuse, domestic violence, and child rearing are not generally visible to persons outside the family (2001: 10). Even though

Greenstein argues that the public image that a family chooses to present to the outside world can be very different from the private, internal image (2001: 11) I felt that most of the participants opened up about what can be considered as ‘private family affairs’. Participants discussed extra-marital affairs, domestic abuse (even those at their own hands – when they would retaliate), sexual abuse, drug addiction and trafficking, intra-generational conflicts, laziness and spoke about certain relatives they genuinely do not like. I was surprised at how much the participants were willing to share, one even talking about a relative who was HIV positive which remains a taboo in the Seychelles.

A final problem that interferes with our ability to study families is the fact that because everyone is familiar with families, we all have ideas about what are *right* or *good* or *appropriate* family behaviours and structures (Greenstein, 2001: 11-12). Hence, it makes it difficult for us to study such phenomenon without our own beliefs intruding into the analysis (Greenstein, 2001: 12). Greenstein stresses that our own backgrounds may bias us either in favour of or against certain forms of family behaviour, our own experiences may limit what we know or understand and finally ethnocentrism which is the belief that our own ethnic group, gender or social class are somehow the *best* or are *right* (2001: 12). As a social scientist, I am aware that it is imperative to remain impartial and to be as objective as possible. I have had good and bad experiences of what a family is, and I am in no way capable of judging how others ‘do’ their family. My work here is to analyse the data and remain as objective as I possibly can.

## **Conclusion**

Doing research on the family can be daunting. Not only am I carrying out research on the family which is already a difficult task, but I am also an insider. However, my position



as an insider has proved to be very useful. If it was not for certain anecdotes that I knew as a Seychellois, I would not have known that I should use verbal consent rather than written consent. This could have resulted in potential participants telling me 'no' when they realised that a signature was required. The use of semi-structured interviews was seen to be the ideal type of research method to use and the participants were eager to talk about their family and this is one of the reasons why it is more relevant to use qualitative research methods to study the family. Even though it has been seen that there are certain problems with carrying out research on the family, it has been for me a worthwhile one and I was able to overcome these problems. The methods I used made it possible for me to gather the data needed to address the research questions which will be discussed in the next three empirical chapters. All of this will be from the participants' perspectives and not the Seychelles people generally.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Analysis – The Seychellois family**

#### **Introduction**

This first empirical chapter looks at the Seychellois family – from the analysis of the participants' perspectives. Hence, the data presented rely solely on the participants' accounts/discussions of their lived experiences as member of a family, and their interpretation of the action/inaction and behaviour of those they identify as family members. So, when I refer to the Seychellois family, I am not referring to Seychellois families generically but to those of the participants who took part in the research. A central element here, is the impact of colonisation and slavery.

The chapter starts off by discussing the different types of family structures that the participants grew up in and those that they are currently living in. This is followed by a focus on the absent father phenomenon, which has been argued to some extent, to be a result of colonisation and slavery. Discussion of the absent father is important because when participants were asked which person they do not consider as family, many of them mentioned their father – their absent father. This discussion is followed by a focus on the Seychellois Creole family and how it is characterized by distinctive racial, power and gender issues. This section reveals that when looking at the Seychelles in a post-colonial context – gender is more important than the other issues, which post-colonial writers have written about. There is a strong gendered pattern, which includes the sexual division of labour, where certain chores are still considered as the woman's responsibility; the 'inside chores' and 'outside chores', where 'inside chores' have been identified to be done mostly by females

and ‘outside chores’ being done mostly by males; and the issue of boys being excused from household chores because of their male gender. The final two sections before the conclusion focus on certain responsibilities which are valued by the participants and the discussion of the negotiation of obligations. First, the focus is on family structures.

## **Family Structures**

As there has not been sociological research about the various types of families that can be found in the Seychelles, the project started to map the different types of families, by asking participants questions about the kind of family structures that they were brought up in and the type of family structure that they are currently living in now. This is important to identify whether family structures remain static or change over time. Cheal asserts that ‘family structures are sets of relationships in which actors recognise one another, expect certain behaviours from one another, and interact in predictable ways. Interactions may be cooperative and often are [...]. Families are diverse and show many different characteristics’ (2008: 8).

The participants came from different types of family structures and most of them include families that have been identified by Keller (1971). This include family structures that are nuclear where both parents are still together, married or cohabiting, or at times involving a step-parent, usually a step-father; single-parent, which usually involves a mother though there are cases of single fathers; extended where usually there is a grand-parent or an aunt, and it is usually a single mother living with her mother and children; and more unusual cases of children being brought up by a grandparent (usually a grandmother) or an aunt. Table 2 illustrates the different family structures that both generations were brought up in and the current one they are living in now.

As Table 2 (see appendix 2 page 289) illustrates, there is no fixed pattern about the participants' family structures. This table reveals diversity and disjunction between discourse and practice. For example, there is this discourse about single mother-hood being something recent, but in practice this is not actually the case, as almost half of the older generation who was brought up in the early and late 1960s was brought up in single parent households. Most cases of extended families usually involved a single mother living with her mother and her children. This confirms Cheal's observation that some single parent families have always been present (2008: 10). As in other societies, families in the Seychelles are diverse. They are fluid and they change and vary over the life course. Children who have grown up in a nuclear family, for example, do not necessarily form nuclear families and the same can be said for children who have been brought up in a single parent family, who do not necessarily become single parents themselves. Essentially there are various kinds of family structures in the sample and there is not one which can be said to be dominant over the others as they tend to be in flux.

#### Family structures participants grew up in

##### *Nuclear families*

The nuclear family includes a mother, a father and their children. It can also include a parent and a step-parent and children. Parents may be either married or cohabiting. Some members of the older generation were brought up in a nuclear model of the family where the father was the sole breadwinner.

### *Single- parent families*

The single parent family comprises of a mother and her children. Among the older women who grew up in a single-mother family, only Lorraine knew her father and her paternal relatives even though her father left the country when she was still a baby. One older man (John) originally grew up in an extended family which involved his single mother, aunts, cousins until eventually his mother built her own house and when they moved the family became a single parent one. Three older men grew up without a father though two of them knew their father. None of the older participants grew up in a single parent family headed by a father.

Two young women grew up with a single father though their family structure was originally nuclear. Three young men grew up in with a single mother but two of them originally grew up in a nuclear family, but their parents divorced when they were young (Steve and Daniel). None of the younger men grew up in a single parent family headed by a father.

### *Extended families*

One older man who was originally brought up in an extended family, grew up with his aunt, uncle, grandparents and cousins, until his parents took him in and he then lived in a nuclear family (Dominic). One older woman was brought up in an extended family, which involves a grandmother, mother and her children (Gemma). Another older woman was brought up in an extended family which included her mother, father and a nephew who is older than she (Jane).

Half of the young women were brought up in an extended family. Only Teresa lived with her parents, grandmother and sister. The other four, their extended family included their single mother and other relatives. These four young women know their fathers but do not have a relationship with them. Six out of the young men grew up in an extended family but the extended families were different. One young man lived with both his parents and grandparents and other relatives (Carlos). Three of them lived in an extended family which comprised of their single mother, grandmother, aunts, uncles and cousins. All three of them grew up without a father. One of them grew up with his mother and grandmother and his father died when he was a baby (Evans).

#### *Other family structures*

There were instances of children being brought up in entirely different types of family structure. For example, one young man grew up with his grandparents and aunts and uncles as his mother died soon after giving birth to him (Tony). He knows his father, but his father was not involved in his upbringing. Another type of family structure involves children being brought up by grandparents like in the case of one older man who was brought up by his grandparents after the death of his mother when he was four years old (Pierre). Only one young woman (Meryl) was brought up by her grandmother, her mother was a teenager when she was born. Whilst in the Caribbean children being brought up by their grandparents, notably, grandmothers, was mostly to do with migration (Chamberlain, 1997; Higman, 1976) – this was not necessarily the case in Seychelles as reflected in the data.

### Family structures participants are living in now

Most of the older women are now living in a completely different family structure compared to the one that they were brought up in, and only Olivia is still living in the same kind of family structure she was brought up in, though at one point she was a single mother. Among the older men, Jaques, Matthew, Dean and Ian are living in the same type of family structure that they were brought up in. Matthew is a single father. Four of the young women are still living in the same kind of family structure that they were brought up in (Teresa, Brenda, Olie and Hannah). When we look at the family structure participants are living in now, there is none that confirm to the male breadwinner wage model where nuclear structure is reinforced by a particular economic model.

### *Nuclear families*

Four out of the ten older women are now living in a nuclear family. Three of them are married. Six out of the ten older men are living in a nuclear family and they are all married. Four out of the six young women who have children and hence a family of their own are living as a nuclear family structure which includes their husband or partner and child/children. Only one is living with a partner who is not the father of her child. Only two of the young men have children and one is living with his wife and his two children. Two young men who are still living with a parent are living in a nuclear family structure, which involves a step-father.

### *Single-parent families and extended families*

I have included both single and extended families here because of the complexities of these two types of family structure in the sense that most of the older women identify themselves as a single parent but they happen to live with their mother, making their family an extended one. There are six older women living in what can be considered as an extended family. However, four of them identify themselves as single mothers. None of the older men are living in an extended family. One older man considers himself as a single father. For two young women, their family structure remains the same. In the case of Olie, her mother passed away when she was 12, resulting in her living with her father. In the case of Hannah, her parents divorced when she was 12 and after living with her mother for two years in another country, she came back home and has been living with her father ever since. Three of the young men are living in a single-family structure which is headed by their mother (Carlos, Neil and Daniel). In the case of Neil, his family structure changed because his father has been incarcerated.

The other two of those six young women who have children are living in an extended version of the family, one with her in-laws and the other one with her mother and grandmother and younger sister. Two childless young women, Molly and Teresa, live in an extended family. Their extended family however comprises of both parents and in the case of Molly including her grandfather, and in the case of Teresa including her sister, brother-in-law and nephew. The other young man who is a father is still living with his mother and stepfather and as he recently separated from the mother of his child, his son gets to stay with him during the weekend and school holidays. Only one young man (Tony) is living in the same family structure he was brought up in (extended). Interestingly none of the childless young men are living with a father and even the two who have a family of their own, they



do not have a father in their life as both their fathers are deceased. Some of them do have a relationship with their father (Steve, Daniel) but most of them do not.

### *Other structures*

Out of the eight childless young men, only one (Laurent) is cohabiting. Christophe is a father to one young adult woman and she lives with her mother though she often visits him. He is now living with his partner and they do not plan to have any children. Cyril divorced his wife of 20 years three years ago and is now living with his partner and his children visit him often. Sam remains single after a divorce and his son visits him in the weekends. He is now living on his own. So, there are not only households that contain families in the Seychelles but also couples who do not have children and even those living on their own.

### **The absent father**

There were different responses to the question of who is considered as family. Responses included husband, wife, child/children, mother, father, brother, sister, niece, nephew, cousin, grandmother, grandfather, and for some of the younger cohort, friends. Wall and Gouveia argue that there is a plurality of understandings of ‘who is considered as family within the networks of personal relationships’ (2014: 361). However, there was a family member that many participants, especially the younger generation, insisted that this person was *not* considered as a family member. This family member who is not considered as such is the father, especially the absent father. Therefore, this section on familial consideration focusses on fathers whose children do not consider them as family. As the project is about

family obligations, I am also focusing on the absent father because he is not obligated to his children.

As Wall and Gouveia argue ‘not having co-resided over the life course and having a negative role in respondent’s life are strong predictors of not considering kin as family’ (2014: 385). The kin under consideration here is the father, who can be considered as the absent father or the non-resident father. In the case of the absent father he is not involved at all in the life of his offspring. Then there is the non-resident father. Bradshaw *et al.*, (1999) identify three routes to becoming a non-resident father. One route is when a single man has a sexual encounter with a woman that results in her becoming pregnant and carrying the baby to term. Another route is when a married couple separate after a child or children have been born to the marriage, or after the wife is pregnant. A third route is when a cohabiting couple separate from each other, either after the birth of a child or after the female partner is pregnant (1999: 23). Bradshaw *et al.*, argue that ‘family life is not as simple as this in actuality, the actual experiences of non-resident fathers are more complex than this’ (1999: 23). For example, Carlos, a young man, does not regard his father as family because he doesn’t receive any support from his father. In fact, most of the young cohort who did not grow up with their father tend not to identify the father as family, “it doesn’t matter if you have the same surname, but if there is no support, why would I call you my family?” (Carlos).

Carlos and his father do not have a close relationship. Carlos is so estranged from his father that he forgot he has a half-brother and only remembered him at the end of the interview. His father cheated on his mother which ended the relationship and the family was split up in two, with Carlos living with his mother, and his older sister living with their father. This acrimony was further reinforced as his father used to drive them (he and his sister) in the family car, using them as an excuse to meet his lover:

“I remember one day, it is actually sad, we went with him and he just parked the car and we were in the car, apparently, he just used the excuse that he was taking us for a ride in the car, but then he parked the car and left and he thought we were sleeping, but I wasn’t sleeping, and then it was just like a 30-minute wait, waiting for him to come back [...]” (Carlos, YM).

When he told his father that he was aware of the infidelity his father was abusive towards him and this added on to the resentment:

“I actually threatened my dad once, we were having an argument, you know kids and dads, and I screamed at him and said, ‘I am telling my mum what you did’, and he, I remember that well, he pulled me by the hair and he told me ‘you are not going to tell her anything I will tell her myself, I am tired of this’”.

For him, the affair and ultimately his parents’ separation affected his academic performance to the extent that he found it difficult to have a ‘proper’ father-son relationship with his father. What he missed was “not about him not being present that was affecting me, but the fact that there was no mum and dad”. He used to have both parents in his life and then, all of a sudden, he only had his mother. Furthermore, when his parents separated he and his mother had to go live with his maternal grandmother, and his grandmother and mother do not get along, as:

“her mother always brings up things that are not so nice, you know like ‘you were young, you broke up then you lived with your kids in my house and now’, you know, typical stuff”.

His mother ended up having to depend on her mother for accommodation, struggled with bills, and all of this could have been avoided if his father has not cheated and he blamed his

father still. So ultimately Carlos' father is blamed for many things that have gone wrong in Carlos' life. This includes him getting low grades when he used to be a star pupil; his father no longer being around; his mother having to go back to her own mother who was against the separation, as in the Seychelles there is this common saying especially amongst the older generation that 'ou bezwen anmenn ou lakwa' which is translated as 'you need to carry your cross'. This relates to women having to stay in abusive relationships because that is their burden and their cross and they have to carry it (like Jesus did).

Another example of a young man who knows his father but chose not to have him in his life was Tony whose mother died soon after giving birth to him. Tony was bitter towards his father, "I wanted nothing to do with him", he said. He considered his father a coward, "because he, at his first trial of being defeated by life, he gave up". He was referring to when his mother passed away. He felt honoured that his mother chose to save him, "[...] because my mother dying was not an event, it was a choice, because the doctor gave her the choice" and he felt thankful that she showed the moral obligation she had towards him as his mother, by giving up her life for him, but his father failed to follow through. He did not want to feel connected to his father as he felt that his father not only let him down but has also let his mother down, "I found my dad to be inadequate of my mother's love". According to him his mother was willing to make a sacrifice for him, but his father failed in his obligation as a father, and for him that is unforgivable:

"I just can't look at him, I feel too much pity, I can't even talk to him and each time I see him he just talks about his grand plans, that I know he is going to fail and he is just going to ask me for money, I know this and it is annoying".

Other young people also do not have a close relationship with their biological father. As Bourdieu (1977) argues, family and kinship ties have to be 'worked at' if they are to be

maintained and to remain in any way meaningful. The young participants knew who their father is, they might meet him in town, but they do not have a relationship with him. Additionally, they do not even consider him as family:

“I did not involve him in that [her nuptial], I am still holding on to the fact that he has never been around, so why do you need to be there on the most important moment of my life, when you were not here when my mother was suffering, so why should you bother, even here at the last minute, so I did not involve him at all” (Sandra, YF),

“I’ve never been close to him [father], I did not grow up with him, he was present in my life for about three years maybe, and then he just decided when I turned 18 that, ‘you are 18 now, I don’t have any obligations towards you anymore’ and that’s how it sort of ended the relationship, so I never had a close relationship with him, but at least we have talked at times and met a few times but when he decided to, thought I was older and now an adult so he just, I didn’t see the point to try to have a relationship with someone who did not want to have a relationship with me” (Stephy, (YF).

Obviously, most of these young people did not choose not to see their father. They do not have an option simply because their fathers are not interested in seeing them or maintaining contact with them. This practice is quite common in the Seychelles where some fathers choose to not get involved in their children’s life once the relationship with the mother has ended, once again another result of slavery and colonization. This mirrors patterns from earlier times as stated by Scarr that ‘nor do men always concern themselves at all about the children they may have out of wedlock’ (2000: 4). This might be true for Brenda, Stephy, Meryl, Sandra, Laurent, Tony, Josh, Carlos, Travis and Fabrice because all of them were born out of wedlock, and they do not have a close relationship with their father.

It must be noted that participants from the older cohort seemed more forgiving towards their absent father. Matthew and Gemma were involved in the funeral preparation of their fathers, men who were not there in their life when they were children and adults, men who they only knew fathered them:

“no, father has planted his seeds and then left, there was only our mother [...] but I knew him when I was a child, I had the chance to know him, he died, and even if he did not provide for me I was able to take care of him” (Matthew, OM).

Matthew felt that he had a duty towards his father and even if there was a lack of obligation from his father towards him, he showed his obligation towards his father by being there for him when he passed away:

“he was old, he died, I was able to prepare his funeral arrangements, because he did not live with me, he had his own place, but he died, so I had to pay for all his funeral expenses and bury him, we did not let the government take control of that”.

As Gillis argued, a man could be father to many children not his own, while his children were being fathered elsewhere (1996: 12). This can be argued to be a consequence of slavery. It has been suggested that slavery itself encouraged impermanence in unions and, on the Seychelles evidence, may have been responsible for promiscuity from an early age (Scarr, 2000: 29). This seems to propagate long after slavery was abolished and remained to be the case in the 1960s, the decade that Matthew and Gemma were born:

“when I was growing up I have always been in a single-family environment, there has been stepfathers on and off, but I cannot say that there was someone that I looked up to as a father figure [...] we do not have the same father in this family” (Gemma, OF).

There are however some fathers who feel obligated towards their children and are involved in the life of their children, even if they are no longer in a relationship with the mother of their child/children. Taking into consideration those fathers, they do not identify themselves as a 'single father'. They mentioned 'I am father to [...]'. In fact, all of the male participants who are no longer living with their child/ children are still involved in their life. They had lived with the child/children for the longest period of time, and they are more likely still to be in contact with them (Bradshaw *et al.*, 1999), for example, the fathers of Daniel and Steve; and Sam, Cyril and Christophe who are fathers to young adults. It must be stressed however, that even if they are active fathers, ultimately their children do not live with them. There are no cases of split residency amongst the participants, where some of the children born to the same parents lived with their father full-time and some with their mother (Bradshaw *et al.*, 1999: 101). Rather, what is seen is 'shared care, where a child or all the children from the same family stayed overnight with their father' (Bradshaw *et al.*, 1999: 101). Those who are not in a relationship consider themselves single only because they are not in a relationship. The identification of being single has to do with their marital status.

There are instances of single fathers and there seems to be a strong discourse in the Seychelles that living with a single father is not the norm. This can be argued to be another product of colonization as Scarr argues when paternity laws were discussed in Seychelles Legislative Council, a lawyer interjected in March 1965, that 'bulls don't look after their young – cows do!' (2000:4):

"to many Seychellois, my current family situation is rather a strange one in the Seychelles, you often see single mums with their kids and fathers are totally out of the picture, or if they do see their kids it is not very often, but I have lived with only

my father which often causes a lot of surprises in people and they react differently”  
(Hannah, YF).

Hannah is one of the two cases of young people who lives with a single father but even then, this is not something that Hannah herself wanted. She said that she would prefer to live with her mother, but because her mother does not live in the Seychelles, then she chose to live with her father, because Seychelles is her home and the country she loves. The other young woman who lives with a single father does so because her mother died when she was younger. So, looking at cases of single fathers, it usually is the case because the mother has passed away like in the case of Olie, or left the country, like in the case of Hannah. Matthew who is also a single father to two young women is so, because his wife died when the girls were quite young. It has been argued that as a rule in the Seychelles, children remain with their mothers (Benedict and Benedict, 1982: 229). This can be argued to have become ingrained in the culture and children are expected to live with either their mother or an aunt or their grandmother, (essentially a female relative) and rarely with only their father, as a mother usually keeps her children from previous relationships with her, or turn them over to her mother, her sister or another female relative (Benedict and Benedict, 1982: 229). This might be one of the reasons why Hannah living with only her father is considered as a ‘strange family situation’ and to be untypical of the Seychellois Creole family.

### **The Seychellois Creole family**

The contemporary nature of the Seychellois family has not been discussed as much as other families in a cultural context, so this section will discuss it, in order to understand the different complexities of family life, family practices and rituals in the Seychelles. The Seychellois family would be discussed in a post-colonial setting considering the Seychelles



is considered as a post-colonial society. The Seychellois family can be said to be characterized by distinctive racial, power and gender issues that have been identified by writers of post-colonisation such as Fanon (1952, 1961) and Memmi (1974).

### Racial issues

The problem of racism in the Seychelles remains significant to certain participants, especially the older participants. This is because, for some of them, they have experienced racism first-hand. When discussing racism in the post-colonial Seychelles context, I am making reference to the ‘problem of colour’ which was made by Du Bois when he asserted that ‘the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa and the islands of the sea’ (1903: xx). These participants have lived experiences of racism which has had an impact in some way on the relationship they have with the person who they felt were racist towards them. So, these relationships were conditional on the colour of their skin. This included Tania, (OF) “you can see that my mum is a bit racist, if one or two of her kids are fairer in skin tone, she loves these more”. Tania discussed how she felt that her mother does not love her as much as her other siblings because she is of a darker skin tone compared to her other siblings. This is reinforced by the way her mother behaves towards her:

“she [her mother] talks bad about me to those people [her siblings] and she says that here at my place she is suffering, she is not well, but she still doesn’t want to go anywhere [...] she creates a lot of problems that make my life very difficult”.

Like Tania, Maria (OF) faced racism but from her maternal grandmother. She described her relationship with her grandmother as one which was strained as:

“I could feel that my grandma didn’t like me because I was coloured like my father, because whenever I would come to see her she was not that welcoming, I couldn’t feel that warmth [...]. It was not that great to say that you were going to visit your grandma because there are times that she won’t talk to you, there are times that she would, you know, she did not like it at all, we could feel that we were sort of distant, it’s just simply because of my father” (Maria, OF).

It is fair to say that the way her maternal grandmother treated her father impacted the way she felt towards her maternal grandmother as well. Maria is very close to her father and when she spoke of him, it was easy to see that her father is the parent she feels closer to “I am so close to him and I would tell him everything”. In some way, the animosity she feels towards her maternal grandmother isn’t just a consequence of the way her grandmother treated her but also a consequence of the way the grandmother rejected her father because of his skin colour. In her research about interracial couples Qian argues that interracial couples express concern about potential crises when their families become aware of such relationships (2005: 34). In the case of Maria’s parents, they did face a crisis:

“[...] because my mum comes from the white family, [mentioning several surnames here] she comes from the white family, but my dad is a black man so when my dad met my mum she already had my sister and my grandma didn’t like my father because he was a black man so she told my mum, that she would not allow her granddaughter to live with a black man” (OF).

In fact, Maria’s older sister did not live with them and lived with her grandmother so this ‘white’ sister did not have the chance to share the household with her darker-skinned siblings. As Franda has identified there have been cases in the Seychelles where families have fallen out because of racial issues, such as in the case of a girl with light skin marrying

a man with dark skin, much to the disapproval of the family (1982: 41). So here, this suggestion discussed by Brown *et al.*, (2003) that whites think the worst of blacks and seek to avoid intimate contact with them can be argued to be true. Maria's grandmother made sure that her white granddaughter did not live with a black man and her 'darker skinned' siblings. It could be seen that her wanting to avoid contact between her white granddaughter and the other darker skinned grandchildren has worked to some extent as Maria did not speak much about her white sister and when referring to her siblings she tended to refer to only those who share the same father with her:

“there's five of us [...] I am the third but my sister, the first born, she grew up with my grandma [...] there were four of us living together every day [...] I am the third as I mentioned, there are two girls, [her black sister's name] and me, and two boys before us girls”.

So technically Maria is the fourth child when taking into consideration her older sister. Her two brothers are older than her and her black sister is the youngest of the family so is younger than her. But because she did not have a lot of contact with her white sibling and did not grow up with her, when she thinks of her siblings she identifies herself as the third child and focuses on the ones that she grew up with.

The dynamics of family relations can be said to relate to racial tensions between family members, where the darker you are, you were rejected or 'not liked' or 'loved less'. The only young person who mentioned racial issues is Teresa but only from hearsay as she has often heard her grandma who “always used to say that her mother [Teresa's great-grandmother] did not like her [Teresa's grandma] because she was brown skinned”. So, it was her grandmother who felt her own mother was racist towards her.

In the Seychelles, it is quite common to hear black people being referred to as 'nwanr sovaz, nwanr pa konpran', which when translated in English is 'black savage, black illiterate'

especially when that person is very dark in colour. This statement is said not only by white people but also other people of different skin colours, even black people. Some Seychellois girls still identify the black man as ‘savage’ as described by Fanon, ‘I do not like the negro because he is savage. Not savage in a cannibal way, but lacking refinement’ (1952: 58). So, in this context, behaviour and literacy are seen in parallel to skin colour. As Huber and Solorzano (2015) argue, racial microaggressions are a form of systemic, everyday racism used to keep those at the racial margins in their place. These can either be verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward people of colour, often carried out in subtle, automatic or unconscious forms; or layered assaults, based on a person of colour’s ‘race’, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname (Huber and Solorzano, 2015: 223). In the Seychelles, certain surnames are still considered as being associated with the colour black or the colour white or brown. For example, the surname ‘de St Jorre’ is mostly associated with white people, the surname ‘Sinon’ is mostly associated with brown people with Indian origins and the surname ‘Dodin’ is mostly associated with dark-skinned people. There is still some discrimination and allocation of status based on skin tone (Herring *et al.*, 2004).

In the case of a dark-skinned person coming from a white family, that person may be ostracized by family members but not by the wider society where he or she is seen as ‘brown’ and not black. Few people wish to be called black and prefer the term ‘brown’. There is indeed what bell hooks refers to as ‘black self-hatred’ (hooks, 2015), hearing ‘one another confess in eloquent narratives about the myriad ways those of colour have tried to attain whiteness, if only symbolically’ (hooks, 2015: 10).

As Spencer argues this is the ‘mark of oppression’ which may have been inferred to mean the internalization of self-hatred (2008: 263). In fact, nowadays black is identified with African, whereby many Seychellois argue that they do *not* come from Africa. This is in line

with Huber and Solorzano's argument that some would disassociate themselves from a racial group (2015: 32). Interestingly, the participants who did focus on racial issues within the family believed that this was a direct result of colonisation. Here, it can be argued that the history of slavery has impacted family life in the Seychelles, given that family in the Seychelles is in many ways a product of master-slave relationships (Scarr, 2000). As highlighted by Huber and Solorzano, these discourses have a history (2015: 231):

"I will tell you it is not something new, it is a structure that has been here, I think like I told you before, the colonial system where the slaves were here, me, as a *gran blanc* I come, I can have a sexual relationship with her, she cannot tell me no, she has to always submit, so the *gran blanc* came and have kids and so we also, we have taken this tendency where I do not need to marry, I do not need to be in a relationship, I just met him like that, this is some trend that we have picked up and it has become the norm" (Tania, OF).

*Gran blanc* is a term that was used to refer to the white slave master, and after the abolition of slavery it was used to refer to the white land owners (Shillington, 2009). It is a term that is rarely used nowadays. The older participants believe that this relates to colonialism:

"This has to do with our colonial time, there was the system of the *gran blanc*, who has always been up there and the blacks down there" (Tania, OF),

"obviously, it is something that we have inherited from the colonial days if not from the time of slavery [...] some parents would disagree with their children going with somebody of, darker shade than them, because the lighter the skin, the better you've done" (Christophe, OM).

This is something that is reflected in Fanon's work, where he argues that the black woman 'asks nothing, demands nothing, except a bit of whiteness in her life' (1952: 42). Therefore, Fanon's work has proved to be significant to the Seychelles context as he focuses on racial issues in his country Algeria when it was colonised by France and with Algeria and the Seychelles being part of Africa, his work can be used contextually to the Seychelles. As Christophe said, many people who are 'black' wish to have some 'whiteness in their life'. There is this common saying amongst the Seychellois people which is about the black Creole woman or family wanting some whiteness in her/their life:

"Take for example this saying, there was this saying in Seychellois family 'in anmenn en pe laklerte dan lakour' (translated as 'he has brought light at home') why do we say this, why is this needed [...]" (Christophe, OM).

As mostly the older cohort focused on racism, this remains an issue related mostly to the older generation:

"for the Seychellois, there is still the question of white and black. I remember when I was in secondary school, I had a white girlfriend and she would always say to me 'if my parents know that I am with you, I will get into problems' and she said, 'especially my grandma', you see it is a generation" (Christophe, OM),

"[...] and this [racism] has created the tendency of having this disparity between us, it is not a lot now, but it still exists" (Tania, OF).

Hall (2010) noted that those (biracial women with Eurocentric features) who were light-skinned were regarded as more attractive. This still exists because the way Tania sees her mother addressing her grandchildren, preferring those who are lighter skinned:

“she compares, and I am seeing this with my grandchildren, she is always, the one for [daughter] because he is white, she always has nice things to say about him and she even makes racist remarks, where my siblings who have grandchildren who are black, she is always making those racist remarks, like why is this one so black, she [her mother] would say this one who is white she is pretty, she is white, with straight hair, she is pretty, so what are you trying to say, that if someone is black with frizzy hair, that person is not pretty, she likes to make those remarks like that, and I don’t like it, I don’t like it”.

It is important to note that Tania mentioned that her mother is black and yet she makes racist remarks. However, Tania herself, referred to the skin tone of her children, considering one white, one Indian and one black. She noted that this is still typical in the Seychelles especially in white families:

“it is typical in families where there are some white, so there is some of that racism, if we have our daughter or son who is white we are not really in favour of them, if he or she brings home a black man or black girl, we would prefer if they bring someone having the same skin tone as them, for them to have a relationship with”.

So, in this context some younger participants have also experienced the notion of racism as Brenda, a young woman mentioned how she was more accepted by her in-laws because of her skin colour which is fairer in contrast to that of her sisters’. Even though it has been argued that young men and women today are more open to interracial relationships than their parents are (Qian, 2005: 34) they still experience some racism. For example, Stephy (YF) has also noted how her own in-law is not particularly fond of her especially as her fiancé is white and she is not:

“no woman is good enough for their sons, that I have learned from a very young age, it is very sad but it is very true [...] she [mother-in-law] likes the previous woman that was with her son better [she was white like him] so when they broke up and I got together with her son [...] the type of parent who in her mind her son should still be with that person”.

In fact, her mother-in-law categorically refuses to have anything to do with her, hoping as Stephy noted, that her son would eventually break up with Stephy and go back to the other woman:

“he [Stephy’s fiancé] has talked to his mother about this but at the end of the day he says that she is free to form her own opinion, as long as she does not dictate our lives then she may have her reservations or feelings, as long as they do not affect us, and he cannot change her mind, so he has told her that we are not breaking up, he is not getting back with the other woman”.

Stephy claimed that in some ways it made her feel sad as “she doesn’t really know me that well, so she cannot form an opinion about me” and the mother-in-law rejects her because she is seen as not being good enough for her son – essentially having the wrong skin tone. This issue of parents-in-law accepting an in-law because of their skin colour was also discussed by Tania, when she was talking about her first daughter (who is fairer than the other two daughters):

“they will ask you if you couldn’t have stopped on another bus stop, (chuckles) like, my first daughter, her mother-in-law really loves her, the family really loves her, and the young man was fair as well, but I felt that the skin tone, my daughter’s skin tone helped her to be accepted in that family, they are not very black, but you feel that they feel that he has looked for someone who is like them, someone they were



expecting their son to bring home because I have always heard his grandmother say, he has chosen well his bus stop to stop on” (Tania, OF).

This issue of ‘having chosen the right bus stop to stop on’ reflects the Creole saying of ‘anmenn lalimyer dan nou salon’ (translated as ‘bringing some light in our living room’). As Fanon has argued the mulatto (which is essentially a woman with fairer skin colour) ‘wants not only to turn white but also to avoid slipping back’ (1952: 54). So essentially here, Tania’s daughter has not ‘slipped back’ and because of her skin tone she was more accepted by her in-laws. Christophe suggested that:

“there is a separation or an attempt to separate black and white, but for political reasons, for stability, for the tourism image that we project Seychelles, as we are afraid to talk about it, but it’s there” (OM).

This is referred to by Franda as ‘the hypocrisy about race’ which he argues is very much present in the Seychellois society (1982: 38). Here, Diem and Carpenter note that many have accepted that racism is a mere by-product of our multicultural society, thus choosing to go about their daily lives without regard to the complexities entrenched within issues of racism (2013: 57). Racial issues are not the only characteristics of post-colonial Seychelles but also the issue of power, in the form of the dependency complex.

### Depending on the state

It has been identified by post-colonial writers such as Fanon, that the state has certain power over the people, especially more so over people who was once colonized. This is referred to as the ‘so-called dependency complex of colonized peoples’ (Fanon, 1952: 61). As Benedict (1982) argued, ‘the Seychellois has had a long tradition of receiving orders from

above' (cited in Franda, 1982: 31). Though it has been asserted by Campling *et al.*, that many people have become dependent on the state it must be noted that this dependency is mostly on the welfare system (2011: 94). However, this has not proved to be necessarily the case with regards to those who took part in the study. As Loomba argues the legacies of colonialism are varied and multiple even as they obviously share some important features (2005: 20). In fact, the participants were adamant that families should not rely on the state, unless in dire situations, like if the family feels that they cannot afford to pay for a carer, or someone has no close family member to provide personal care for that person, though anecdotes suggest that in the Seychelles it is quite difficult for someone not to have any known relatives considering the size of the country.

According to Anderson (1990), it is not enough to assume that the family as a social institution is ready, willing and able to shoulder the burden of supporting its members who cannot fully care for themselves, either practically or financially. Anderson (1990) argues that because people have been able to rely too much on the state, the commitment to strengthening family life is being eroded. Finch and Mason (1993) assert that in some cases kin relations might want to take care of their own but because of other commitments like career and children, it makes it difficult to practice this. This is not necessarily the case in the Seychelles as identified by the analysis of the data. Many participants noted that they should fulfil their duties as a family member regardless of other commitments like career and children. In fact, they commented that family members are there to make fulfilling those other commitments easier. For example, Tessa, who has a disabled toddler can rely on her mother and mother-in-law to take care of her child, considering there is no day care centre which is willing to take care of her child. This in turn makes it easier for her and her partner to continue with their careers. Where children are concerned, many participants noted that

one of the main duties families are responsible for is bringing up their children themselves and this should be a family duty, not one of the state's duties.

Some participants noted that the state has certain duties. This is towards orphans, but the state should not be involved in raising children who have parents and/or other family members who can do that. Many participants chose to stress on this duty. It is one of the most common duties discussed by the participants, for example Loraine (OF) “[...] we should raise our children to be responsible citizens, not rely on the state to feed our kids, and clothe our kids”.

Cyril argued that too many people are relying on the state first when they could rather have relied on family members and only go to the state when all help is exhausted. He argued that in his line of work he has seen too much of this over-dependence on the state. Other older males shared Cyril's views:

“[...] the state will support you to help your family, it should not give you money, it should create employment opportunities for you to work, so that you can get access to finances so that you can help your family” (Pierre, OM).

Only the older generation raised these issues. This could be because the older generation have seen people over-depending on the state, and the younger generation who is mostly still relying on their parents have not yet registered this dependency on the state.

Many people noted that when people depend on the state they will continue to keep the government who is providing for them in power to ensure that their needs are met. This is an ambivalent relationship between the state and the people. As Memmi asserts ‘the colonial relationship which I had tried to define chained the colonizer and the colonized into an implacable dependence, moulded their respective characters and dictated their conduct’

(1974: 5) and here the ‘colonizer’ can be identified as the government and the ‘colonized’ the people of Seychelles:

“You know, over the past 35 years, people have been led to believe that the state is there to spoon-feed them, we’ve now realised economically, it is not viable and it is difficult to erase that old mentality in people’s mind, the state is there to facilitate your life to ensure that you’ve got work, that you work for everything that you want in life, I think the state should be just a facilitator, it should be up to us to do what we think we should do and earn with our cash, with our own energy” (Sam, OM),

“people have this mentality that it is the government, that it is your right, we are too dependent – it came from the SPPF thing, when they took over they made people think that everything is free, education is free, health is for free, how can it be for nothing, nothing is for free, and now things are changing and they have to pay for some stuff and it is so wrong for them, according to them they are not supposed to pay for anything” (Tessa, YF),

“they want to keep this culture of providing things for free for Seychellois, but we will get nowhere with this kind of mentality, we stay stagnant and we don’t grow and a lot of people, when you continuously give, they would want more. They [government] create this dependency” (Tony, YM).

All the participants acknowledged that families should be the first point of assistance. So, where power and the dependency complex are concerned it can be argued that this is the one characteristic of post-colonialism that is not too pertinent in the Seychelles. The main characteristic and the one that has been identified to be the most pertinent is that of gender.

## Gender issues

Seychellois families are characterised by certain gender issues, and this has been discussed by most of the participants. Most of the Seychellois participants and their families have distinct gender division of labour, and though Seychelles is a society which has been labelled as matrifocal, patriarchal discourses remain. For example, a recent survey shows that many women in Seychelles still think that ‘if a man beats a woman it shows that he loves her’ (Chakamba, 2016). This is surprising as Seychelles has been identified as a country which is considered a gender progressive country, having earned the region’s top SGDI score since 2011 (Chakamba, 2016). This shows that there is a need to create awareness in both boys and girls (not just boys as insinuated by the MSACDS that, ‘there is a need to create more awareness about gender-based violence, with work done with children, especially boys to improve their attitudes towards girls and women’ (MSACDS, 2014: 62)) so that they *both* know, for example, that there is never an excuse for rape and this should be done at the educational level and through special sensitisation programmes in the media. What the survey revealed was that, even in countries moving forward with increasingly progressive policies, attitudes toward gender among the general public are still stuck in the past (Chakamba, 2016).

It can be argued that women in the Seychelles fare considerably well in contrast to women in other post-colonial societies. There is no gender pay gap as the law makes provision for ‘fair and equal wages for work of equal value without distinction’ (The Constitution of Seychelles, 1994: 36-37). There are no differences in membership of elite organisations by gender. In fact, in the government there is almost an equal representation of men and women, and in some instances more women than men. For example, the Secretary of State for Presidential Affairs, the Chief Secretary and Head of the Civil Service,

the Chief Press Secretary, the Principal Secretary for President's Office and the Director for Cabinet Affairs are all women. These are some of the highest offices in the government. Only the Secretary of State Affairs, Diplomatic and Economic Advisers to the President are men. The Designated Minister is a woman. Five out of the twelve ministers are women (State House, 2017). The government of the Seychelles is made up of three branches. There are specific laws which guide these branches and they are found in the Seychelles Constitution, which is the supreme law in Seychelles (The Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles). The three branches are the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary. The head of the Executive is the President of the republic. The head of the Legislative is the Speaker of the National Assembly. The head of the Judiciary is the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice is a woman, so the third branch of the government is headed by a woman.

It can be rightly ascertained that indeed Seychelles is matrifocal. The matrifocality of the Seychellois society is reflected in many of the participants' responses. When I refer to the term of matrifocality I am using Gonzalez's definition that when members of the extended family are included in the household, these are more likely to be relatives of the mother than of the father, and that personal contacts occurred more frequently with mother's kin than with father's kin (1970: 233-234). The emphasis is on the maternal grandmother (Chamberlain, 2003: 69). When people talk about family practices it is mostly linked to the mother. This is reflected in the participants' comments:

“they are the people who since I have been young have always been around me, especially those from my mother's side, who we would more than often be around, my cousins, I consider them as sisters and brothers” (Steve, YM),

“I don’t have any form of relationship with my aunts and uncles from my father’s side, they have never accepted me, so I never got the chance to know them” (Stephy, YF).

Basically, women emerge as important generators of interaction between close kin, particularly on their side of the family (Coenen-Huther *et al.*, 1994; Troll, 1987; Wall *et al.*, 2001). When the participants talked about the family, they focused on the relationship with their maternal kin. Some are even closer to the maternal side of the family:

“I’m mostly close to my mother’s family because I’m well familiar with them [...] and never, like on my dad’s side I know them well but I’m not familiar with them” (Daniel, YM),

“with my mother’s side yes, with my father’s side, only a few, quite a few of them, but my mother’s side [...] it was just our way of growing up, for some reasons we just grew more closely with my mother’s side” (Steve, YM).

The fact that children feel closer to the maternal side has been posited by Gonzalez ‘in the eyes of the children the maternal figures would be the strongest, most stable, most dominant’ and children see mothers as not only nurturing but disciplinary figures (1970: 234):

“the ones at my mother’s side, yes, all of them, even those that live on Praslin, all of them, are really close, but on my father’s side it is different. It is strange how this works [...] sometimes you don’t have that same feelings as the ones on my mum’s, because I think it is a matter of you were brought up there, maybe you always saw them, they were always giving you support, but my aunt on my father’s side, [...]it is not the same, you know she is your family, she is your father’s sister, you like her, you have a relationship but it is not that same intense feeling” (Carlos, YM).

Once again this can be argued to be a product of slavery and colonization. In the slave system, the children would stay with their mother. When considering certain anecdotes, which are common in the Seychelles, they are very much gendered. For example, these three sayings:

‘Poul ki ponn, pa kok (translated as ‘it is the chicken which lays the eggs, not the cockerel’),

‘Ou’n aste bef, ou bezwen aste li ek son korn (translated as ‘you have bought a cow, you need to buy her along with her horns’),

‘Plito pti fiy ki pti garson (translated as ‘a daughter is better than a son’).

These sayings are laden with gendered connotations. The first one is said mostly by mothers of daughters. When a daughter has a child, her mother considers that child as being related more to her than to the child’s paternal family because ‘it is the chicken which lays the eggs, not the cockerel’ – hence there is a certainty that your daughter’s child is hers but not the certainty that your son’s child is his. The second saying has to do with a man who has met a woman who already has children from previous relationships, so the man has to accept her with her ‘horns’ which are basically her children. Some of these anecdotes have even been used in local songs, which have become popular – to reflect certain experiences the singer has gone through. The last saying is that daughters are preferred than sons because parents can depend on their daughters to take care of them when they become dependent. Having a daughter makes this hope more of a certainty. This is a strong gender pattern. It seems to be quite rigid. Another gender pattern is the way that labour is divided in the home.



### *The sexual division of labour in the home*

Another one of the main gender issues that was discussed by the participants revolves around the issue of sexual division of labour (Crompton, 1998, 2006, 2007; Crompton *et al.*, 2010; Crompton and Lyonette, 2015; Oakley 1974, 2005; Walby, 1986, 1999) and this involves mostly household chores. For example, the MSACDS stated that ‘anecdotal reports suggest that during the dry season in Seychelles (June to September), water collection and management of water resources are left to the girls and women. The boys and men come home and expect to have water to drink and to wash. This situation is particularly interesting in terms of socialisation processes and socioeconomic distribution of power in Seychelles’ (2014: 18). This division of labour was reflected in the responses of some of the participants:

“the girls clean the house, specially the living room, the boys, maybe the toilet, the bathroom, cleaning outside, sweeping the yard, putting the rubbish out” (Loraine, OF),

“my daughter would always be cleaning the house and help me out with the clothes, the laundry, whereas my son would always be in the kitchen or outside cleaning the car” (Maria, OF),

“my brother did most of the heavy lifting with my step-dad, cleaning outside, and I was the youngest, so I did the house chores, cleaning everything in the house” (Vivienne, YF).

A pertinent message about diversity of the Seychellois family is about men’s involvement in the family, or rather men’s lack of involvement in the family. However, from the data collected this is not necessarily the case as all the men were involved to some extent in some household responsibilities. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate this (see appendix 2 page 293 and 295).

As Table 3 illustrates – cooking, which was something that used to be done predominantly by women are now being done by men and women equally.

The dishes tend to be done mostly by men.

Ironing, laundry and cleaning the house are still being done predominantly by women.

Gardening is still being done predominantly by men.

As Table 4 illustrates – sons who are still living with their parents do not do much around the house, but those who are in a relationship and living with a partner such as Evans and Laurent do their fair share of the housework.

But then again, when looking at the young women's involvement they also do not do much and tend to rely on their parents – it is mostly those who are living with a partner who do their share of the housework.

These responsibilities – cleaning the house, doing the laundry, ironing, taking care of the sick and anything to do with young children – are still being done predominantly by women, whereas the gardening is still being done predominantly by the men. During the time of slavery and colonisation the role of the man slave was seen to be strictly limited by daily agricultural work (Scarr, 2000: 29). Such agricultural work involved working with plants such as cottons and cassava. Many men in the Seychelles still view the garden as their domain. They are the ones mostly responsible for mowing the lawn for example. Taking another post-colonial perspective, with regards to the colonised women, many of the female slaves were domestic slaves and 'although the working hours of domestic slaves may have been longer, the work itself was less arduous than that of a field hand, and usually there was greater freedom to move about' (McAteer, 2000: 9). The favoured indoor 'house slaves' were often biracial women (Jablonski, 2012). This is linked with the dominant discourse that there are certain duties that are women's responsibility. There is also the issue of societal ideology on what is considered as a man's work and a woman's work within the domestic

sphere. Housework and childcare are considered as women's rather than men's work, and these beliefs are likely to have become part of men's and women's gender identities (Poortman, and Van der Lippe, 2009: 528). For example, Meryl noted how her boyfriend initially refused to hang out the clothes because of what people might think:

“last time we had an argument because the clothes needed to be hanged outside and he said, ‘you go do it’, and I said ‘why? you are used to doing it’. He told me, ‘no, you are here now and if people see me they would say ‘what kind of man are you? your girlfriend is inside sitting and you’re outside hanging out the clothes’, and I said, ‘don’t worry we will go outside and we’ll hang it together’. And he was fine with that” (YF).

So, Meryl's boyfriend was willing to hang out the laundry in the absence of Meryl, but when Meryl is at home he is worried about what people would say, especially where his masculinity is concerned, that men should not be doing that kind of chore when their partner is around to do it herself.

Certain participants believe that there are certain norms attached to particular chores whilst others note that this was the case only in the past. To have an idea on how things were done in the past, participants spoke about the kind of chores they did whilst growing up. This was discussed mainly by the older participants who were brought up in the late 60s and early 70s, which was essentially during colonial times. In some families, a gendered division of labour persists but in others there is none. Obviously in families where there is only one child or there are siblings of the same gender there is no division of labour between the children. Some of the older participants chose to discuss how things were done when they were children:

“there was a difference of chores, like the boys would not wash the dirty dishes, we would much rather be out looking for wood, the girls would be doing the chores in the house, doing the laundry, clean the windows, sweep [...]” (Dominic, OM),

“it was well detailed that the girls will do inside jobs and the boys will do anything that have to do with the outside, taking care of the pets and the animals” (Cyril, OM).

### *‘Inside chores’ and ‘outside chores’*

Some studies have reported that as children get older, the tasks they assume become more gender-specific, with girls performing primarily inside chores (e.g., cooking and cleaning) and boys engaging mostly in yard work (Antill *et al.*, 1996 in Klein *et al.*, 2009: 100). In the Seychelles context, there tends to be this issue on ‘inside chores’ being done by the females and ‘outside chores’ being done by the males. Inside chores can be referred to as the domestic sphere which relates to the female gender like cooking, whereas outside chores can be referred to more physical and ‘masculine’ chores like taking out the trash, sweeping the yard and mowing the lawn:

“oh no, no, I did not do the same chores as my brothers. I would do the dishwashing and the ironing, the inside jobs, but my brothers would do the outside, cleaning the yard like giving the food to the dogs and the chickens and other animals that we had at home, so they were very different things” (Maria, OF),

“my daughter mops the veranda, sometimes cooks, does the laundry and ironing, things like that, my son sweeps outside, throws away the trash, descales the fish, but he has once told me that girls can also take out the trash” (Suzy, OF).

It can be argued that for Suzy, the way chores are being done by her children have become established family practices. Other participants shared the views of Suzy, that this is a norm in the Seychelles:

“girls usually do the sweeping and the cleaning inside, and boys usually are outside and do heavy duty works, like lifting rocks, cutting down trees, plumbing and stuff like that – it is the norm in Seychelles, most families are like that” (Laurent, YM),

“I think this is typical in the Seychelles, women inside the house, men outside of the house” (Olivia, OF).

For the younger generation, this issue on ‘inside chores’ and ‘outside chores’ is more to do with equity rather than equality:

“I do everything that is inside and my dad does everything that is outside because I don’t know how to do anything that is outside, for example, I can’t cut the grass, I can’t cut this tree as I have a big garden and I can’t do all that because my dad would probably be able to clean the house, to mop the house, and sweep it. But I can’t go outside and cut the tree, it is not for me so he would do it, he doesn’t ask me to go do it because he knows I can’t and he knows I know how to clean the house also and he would let me and he knows I like it to be done a certain way” (Olie, YF).

Criticisms of this notion of ‘outside chores’ and ‘inside chores’ and ‘girl chores’ and ‘boy chores’ were raised by some younger women:

“sometimes when I talk to my friends and they tell me about their families and there is this typical guy job and this typical girl job. Guy job is taking care of the outside like mowing the lawn, emptying the trash, painting the house, other DIY stuff like wires, bulbs or anything that breaks down like pipes, and it’s the woman’s job, like

the kids, the cooking, the cleaning, the decorating, and if you know, if you happen to be lucky enough to live with a partner, as a female, you live with a partner who believes in equality and sharing jobs in the household you are one very lucky female in this country” (Hannah, YF).

Some young males also discussed how they are mostly responsible for the outside chores and even attached some enjoyment to it like Carlos who quipped that “I used to do chores a lot, well outside chores, I love it, give me to clean outside I would do it”. According to him this might be the influence of socialisation, “I remember my dad always went outside and the girls were cleaning inside, and they always wanted us to be like that”. Fabrice is the one who is responsible for taking out the trash because it has always been like that in his family:

“I suppose that’s because of the way like the boys and girls, what boys are supposed to do and what girls are supposed to do, throwing away the rubbish, boys are supposed to do that, so that is alright for me to do it [...] I wouldn’t say it is the norm, like in my neighbourhood, where I live I have seen a lot of girls taking out the trash like sometimes, I even complain why aren’t my sisters taking out the trash, so many girls do it now, even girls do it, but I can say that I’ve come to accept that this is what I am supposed to do” (Fabrice, YM) [shaking his head].

However, even though Fabrice complains about his sister’s lack of involvement in taking out the trash he is the one who tends to be excused from household chores and this is because he happens to be a boy.

*When boys are excused from household chores*

Today, most children are expected to help with household tasks, yet the level and consistency of their participation appears to vary greatly across families (Coltrane, 2000 cited in Klein *et al.*, 2009: 99). Whilst some young males enjoy their household work (which involves outside chores), it was clear to see the annoyance of some of the younger females when they spoke about household chores, and this was portrayed more by those who have male siblings:

“my mum can’t put her foot down to save her life with my brother, he’s like, he is her favourite. I feel like he is her favourite as he tends to get away with more than I would get away with” (Molly, YF).

Molly was referring to how her brother does not help around the house with household chores and these tend to fall on her shoulders. This is also happening in some families:

“I just don’t do any [chores], mummy does it all and the step-dad does it too, they say I am lazy but I still don’t do it, but if I am off duty, I am at home the whole day, I would cook but apart from that I would not do anything, no I might sweep outside and take out the garbage, but that’s all” (Travis, YM),

“Well, the girls would do everything though we only have three boys in the family, it hasn’t always been like that in the family with my aunties and uncles, they did everything [...] that’s why they are very independent in their lifestyle, [...] but when it came to us, the third generation growing up, it was the girls doing everything because boys have a free pass in life, we can just chill” (Tony, YM).

This issue around boys not doing any chores doesn’t seem to be something recent:

“I don’t think my brother did anything. I can’t remember him ever doing anything, but then we’ve always been so much older than him but still today I don’t see him doing the things that we did regarding housework and by the time that I was around 10, 11, I could cook a meal, a family meal like rice, fish or meat on a petrol stove but with him I didn’t see him doing these things” (Lorraine, OF).

Lorraine and her older sister were brought up differently from their younger brother. Her brother “is like the king, we were brought up to be independent but with him it’s like ‘he is my little boy’, my mum still does things for him, still”. Tania’s brothers were also treated more favourably than the female family members:

“there is a lot of favouritism in families here, especially towards the boys, and my mother is not an exception, she loves her sons, I have never had boys, so I don’t understand this relationship between mother and son [...]” (OF).

Boys seem to get away with laziness especially by their mother, who would do that chore instead of having to ‘nag’ as identified by Josh. It is more difficult for girls to shield away from the domestic sphere as they are the ones who tend to be more active where cleaning the house, for example, is concerned. As Benedict and Benedict assert ‘sons are indulged by their mothers; they are not expected to perform household tasks while daughters are charged with many domestic tasks’ (1982: 200). Clearly sons and daughters were socialised differently where ‘being a boy meant learning to be tough, to mask one’s feelings, to stand one’s ground and fight – being a girl meant leaning to obey, to be quiet, to clean, to recognize that you had no ground to stand on’ (hooks, 2015: 87). Some young men were not even too timid to mention how they have been labelled as ‘lazy’ by their parents. This included Tony, Travis, Carlos and Fabrice. Tony even claimed that, “I still don’t know how to iron, still



don't know how to work a washing machine". There were few cases where some young men do want to chip in, but their mother refuses their help:

"my mother insists doing it [shopping] by herself, I've told her many times if you need help with the shopping, let me know, but she never tells me when she is going shopping" (Daniel, YM).

However, it can be argued that there is an element of double standards in the sense that boys were being encouraged to do chores which have been labelled as 'women's work' whereas girls were not being given this opportunity by their parents:

"my mum brought me up in a way that when I have my own house I am able to do everything and this for me it is, like really mum, 'am I supposed to put my clothes in the washing machine and go like hang it or am I supposed to go out and take the spade and do some hard work, some real things that you can't do physically', because this is what it's like, we still have the argument where I see myself putting my clothes in the washing machine" (Neil, YM).

Neil is annoyed by this 'double standards' where, he as a male is being brought up to take on 'female responsibilities', and yet his sister manages to get away from doing 'male chores' such as handling a spade, on the basis that she is a girl, "she will never take up a spade and go out to dig out some grass". He was annoyed that his sister had the option to choose, "girls will choose, they will not wash the things that are greasy, they will leave it [for boys to do]". Even Suzy discussed how her little boy once told her that girls can take out the trash, but this is not something that girls are doing in some families, especially in those which consist of a boy (as well as girls), as discussed by Fabrice, "my sister would never, ever go and take out the trash, she would never do that". Ian also spoke about how his daughter refuses to throw the rubbish away "the daughter tends to be a little more, 'this is not really my job', she will

say ‘huh huh, that is the boy’s job to do’’. Even Pierre’s adult daughter “has little interest in domestic things”. Anecdotes also suggest that most girls do not visit the market and handle fresh fish, nor descale and gut fresh fish.

However, for a few participants there was no sexual division of labour taking place in the family home. In those families, chores are shared equally between the boys and the girls:

“at my house, there isn’t any division, they multi-task, in fact my sons clean the house better than I do, they wash better than me, sometimes I am very surprised, I make sure that when they have their own home they do not need to rely on a woman to do things for them, I make sure that they know how to clean, cook. And they know how to tidy their clothes, [son] since he was 11 he ironed his uniform himself. I was brought up like that, our parents made sure we were independent so I make sure my kids are too, there were 11 of us, my mother would not have been able to iron 11 sets of clothes every day, just when you have your 10<sup>th</sup> birthday you will go do the laundry in the river, collect water, collect woods, to cook, you would do everything” (Alice, OF),

“there was no distinction, I will get my son to do all chores like cleaning the house, do the dishes, there was no distinction and my daughter, same thing, they would come and help me with the gardening, no distinction, just to give them the sense that no, this is work for just the ladies and this for the boys, no, I wanted them to do everything” (Jaques, OM).

It is important to note that gender practices in certain family structures vary. Here I will discuss the relationship between the family structure and gender practices. Tania, Alice, Jane and Suzy are all single and do not live with a partner. So, it is significant not to assume that they are the sole ones responsible for all the chores. This is because Jane and Alice have

both grown up daughters and sons. In Jane's case, there is a division of labour as her daughter is more involved with the 'inside chores' and her sons with the 'outside chores'. In the case of Alice, her children all do a bit of everything, so there is no gender division of labour. So even if both family structures are the same, gender practices are different.

Tessa, Stephy, Sandra, Vivienne and Meryl have kids and live with a partner. They all share conjugal roles however, the laundry and ironing are being done predominantly by the young women, and their partner are the ones mostly involved with the gardening and outside chores. However, they do note that their partner helps with cleaning the house. Brenda lives with her mother, sister, grandma and her children so considering the house is made up mostly of women, chores are shared. In cases where there are only the two partners living together because the kids have left the house, there is more of a shared conjugal role situation compared to when there are still kids living at the house:

"I do everything, she [partner] does everything, cooking, I wash her bras, everything, we share, do the dishes, like if I cook, she washes, I'm sweeping the floor, she'll mop, I'm doing the bed, she'll put the kettle on" (Christophe, OM),

"We would do it together, now being the two of us [son and daughter are overseas at university] I would do it more, because we clean the house once a week, so it would be on a Saturday morning, I would clean the house whilst she does the laundry" (Jaques, OM).

Some men commented that their wife refuses to let them do the laundry as quipped by Pierre, "she loads the washing machine and she is not too happy with us touching it".

So, gender practices vary within different family structures. A single mother is not always left with doing all the chores by herself. For some women who have a partner most

of the chores are being done by themselves and their daughters. For some women who are married their husbands help them with the chores. Though most ‘inside chores’ are still being done predominantly by women, and ‘outside chores’ being done by men, at the end of the day men are getting more involved in household chores. There is however one duty that remains predominantly the woman’s responsibility and that is to provide care to either the sick or the elderly. This has been referred to as the gendered division of care. This will be discussed in the final empirical chapter which focuses on the care of the elderly. The following section will focus on certain family responsibilities that participants value.

## **Responsibilities**

### The care of children

For some participants, especially mothers their focus is on the care of their children, especially those who are still dependent on them. These mothers are focussing on responsibilities that they are practicing in their home. Olivia makes sure that her son is well dressed for school and that he has everything he needs and “this is very important to me”, so for her, her main responsibility right now is towards her younger son. Her responsibility towards her adult daughter is to provide advice when asked. Other mothers share Olivia’s views, as for them their main responsibility is also towards their children, such as Suzy, “it is my responsibility to make sure that my kids are well disciplined” and Tania:

“it is our duty, our duty with everything that has to do with nurturing that child, [...] make sure that she is educated in the right path, make sure that we follow her education, these are the duties and the responsibilities of parents, everything that has to do with a child”.

Not just mothers focused on their children, but some fathers did as well. Some fathers focused on the emotional aspect rather than the disciplinary side where their fatherly duties are concerned. For example, according to John the most important duty for him as a father is not only to discipline his children but to give them cuddles and hugs. Matthew as well, felt that his children “need to have love, that plays a huge role, love at the home, it is important, if you have a child, you need to sow love to that child” and he insisted on this as his children’s mother passed away when they were still very small.

Not only the older generation focused on issues around children but also the younger generation, and what is interesting is that those who do not have children focused more on children’s issues than those who are already parents. As noted before six out of the ten young women have children and two of the young men have children. However, it must be noted that in the case of Teresa when she talks about parents taking care of their kids she is identifying her own situation as a ‘child’:

“once they get older, giving them some of those responsibilities, maybe cleaning the house or helping mum cook, or going in the garden with dad, once they get a dog, show their kids how to take care, stuff like that, I would say it like that anyway”.

These responsibilities that Teresa noted should be given to children when they are older are those that she is currently doing right now. Teresa cleans the house with her mother, she helps her mother cook, she does the gardening with her father, she has a dog and she helped her mother took care of her grandmother. So, she is focusing on her own responsibilities and for her, these are responsibilities that a daughter should be practicing at home.

There were some similarities in the responses given by the younger women with that of the older women. This relates to childcare. For example, for Tessa her child is her number one responsibility. She had a difficult birth and her baby spent three weeks in NICU. Her

child has been diagnosed with cerebral palsy, so she needs extra attention, and this was the main responsibility Tessa focused on. Stephy is another young mother whose main duties are towards her child:

“everything that comes with bringing up a child, you have to provide for them financially, you have to ensure that they have everything they need, you have to ensure that your child understands that you don’t get everything you want but you must have everything you need, you have to be able to have control over your child, teach them about what is right and wrong, teach them about how they should behave”.

Stephy felt very strongly about her responsibility as a mother. She even moved out of her mother’s house, even if she is very close to her mother and has a very good relationship with her. She moved out because she wanted to raise her son in her own way and that her mother would at times unintentionally interfere and she was not happy with this. The young men who are fathers also focused on their responsibilities as fathers:

“young kids, you give them minor chores appropriate to their physique and their age, as they grow up you can increase the level of responsibilities and the duties, kids let them roam around and play, develop and enjoy their youth but you make them aware that when they grow up they will take these obligations” (Josh, YM),

“you should be taking care of your children, give them the love and affection that they need, [...] I need to go to work, I need to wake up early in the morning to go to work, this is my responsibility, [...] so we have to go to work so that we can secure the money that we get at the end of the month, so we can do those payments and give our kids what they need” (Evans, YM).

Josh focuses on his own experience as a father. He would spend the weekends with his son, showing him how to do certain chores specific to his age. These moments are important to him as he and the boy's mother recently separated, and he only gets to spend time with his son during the weekend. Josh also reflected on his own experience of growing up without a father and he stressed that he would not let his son grow up without a father like he did. Evans also feels very strongly about his duty as a young father. When his then girlfriend was pregnant with his first child she was not allowed to see him. He was not even allowed to see his son after the birth. The mother-in-law wanted to take the son and social services were involved. Evans spoke about how he used to be a womaniser, who spent a lot of his time smoking, drinking and going out having fun, but when he realised that he could lose his son he "pulled up my socks". He got a job so that he would have money to be able to support his young family financially. He received support from his mother and other people, and he managed to secure an accommodation for his young family. Social services came to visit their small house to see if their son should stay with them and they won the court case. His son now has his surname and they have even added on to the family. He married his girlfriend and he stressed that no one is going to keep him from his family. He reflected on his own experience of growing up without a father figure as his father died when he was a baby and for him being a father to his children is his most important duty. Evans does not just feel responsible towards his young family, he practices it.

It is interesting to note how men, both older and younger men, who have had no relationship or a 'bad' relationship with their father are trying their best to make sure that their child/children do not go through what they did. They are very reflective about their role as a father and take their obligations seriously. These fathers include Christophe (OM), who is divorced but would spend time with his daughter, even staying late till night time at his ex's, much to the annoyance of his current partner, but for him that was important; Matthew,

who is a single father to his girls and refuses to bring his girlfriend home to his daughters in case the women clash; Josh (YM), who spends whatever free time he has with his young son; Evans (YM), who made sure he is in the lives of his children. All these fathers share one thing in common and that is their own father was absent in their lives.

### The care of the elderly and the sick

Some participants also feel responsible for the care of their elderly parents such as Chantal, “all the responsibilities which have to do with her [mother] fall on me [...] I am happy to do it, but at times I am a bit tired, but I do it”. The care of the elderly was discussed by mostly the older generation. Cicirelli argues, as a social norm, familial responsibility reflects the generalized expectation that children should support their older parents in times of need (1988, 1990). There is the normative expectation that adult children should be responsible for the care of their ageing parents (Silverstein, 2006: 961). It can be argued that the younger generation did not mention this as a family responsibility either because their parents are still ‘young enough’ to take care of themselves and are not identified as an ‘elderly’. The term ‘elderly’ is used to refer to their grandparents. Or, there is the possibility that some of the young adults have seen or are seeing how taking care of the elderly can affect their parents. For example, Teresa, Stephy and Brenda are all annoyed and distressed that their mothers are the ones who are taking full responsibility for the care of their grandmothers, and their aunts and uncles are not giving a helping hand:

“when we ask for a helping hand with granny, no one is willing to help and they expect you to do miracles for granny, when they are not helping out, this makes you frustrated at times because you also want to function as a family, there are certain things that we cannot do, we want to go on a family vacation and we can’t go, we



want to go for a weekend on La Digue, as a family, mother and her kids, but we can't, because there is no one to look after the granny" (Brenda, YF).

Brenda noted that this has affected her mother's health, a mother she openly claimed she cares a lot about:

"the age that I am right now, I cannot afford to lose my mum [...] 'you have us', this morning I just told her, 'you feel you are sick, you can stop working, you can sit here, you have us, we can give you food, that won't be a problem for us, we know that you are not ill, under pressure, stressed out, we know that you are here'" (YF).

The responsibility of taking care of the elderly was also discussed by the older men. For example, Cyril noted that "doing everything that comes with the family, caring for the old" is an important responsibility. Cyril is very active in the care of his ailing mother and even takes turn to stay with her when she is admitted in the hospital, a responsibility he shares with his brother. Dominic used to take care of his father who lived with him for many years, before it was finally decided by the whole family that it would be best if the father went to live with his older sister. Another older man who focused on the care of the elderly was Ian:

"I grew up being close to my mum and to some extent I was close to my dad when, he was living with us, [father worked on outer islands] despite there was a distance, I felt that I needed to take care of them, [...] I know there would be other people who would be there to support but you would expect a bit more from your kids, because the sharing starts at home and that's the way we've brought them up and it is an expectation".

This can be argued to be one of the effects of the socialisation process as he relates to what he has been taught by his parents, and what he is teaching his kids. In fact, Ian expects his

children to take care of him when he is an elderly person the same way that he has taken care of his parents before their death. The act and ultimately practice (because practice is ‘doing’) of taking care of the elderly will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Another responsibility that family members tend to share and get involved in is when there is an illness, especially one which is considered as life threatening or terminal. Considering that it is usually women who are involved in providing care for the sick, and it is seen as the responsibility of the female relatives, especially the daughters, this responsibility was discussed mainly by the women:

“all five of us tried to give him [father] as much support as he needed, taking him to see the doctors, keeping his appointments, we took turns to bathe him, cook his food, feed him, we took good care of him when he was sick” (Suzy, OF) [her father had terminal cancer],

“people would always come together when there’s somebody who is sick or has passed away, and we stayed with her [terminally sick mother] at the hospital and we cooked, we didn’t let her eat hospital food, so this was the comfort that we could give to her, and stayed with her overnight, little things like these” (Christophe, OM).

Alongside taking care of the sick there is the responsibility of visiting the sick in hospital. Visiting the sick in hospital in the Seychelles is considered as a social convention:

“if you don’t do it you’re frowned on, but some people make it a farce, it turns into a fiasco at times, you have people who just go for the sake of going so that people don’t say, ‘oh my god he didn’t even go to the hospital, that person is in the hospital how come she doesn’t go’ [...] it has become a social obligation when you think of

it now, you have a family member or a friend in hospital you go, you go because society says you go, not because you *want* to go” (Hannah, YF).

Taking care of and visiting the sick also involves an element of cooperation between those involved:

“when somebody is ill, like in our case, family members who are closest to the hospital will be taking care of the clothes, bringing in some food if that person says, ‘I am not happy with the hospital food’, taking turns attending to that person” (John, OM),

“we take turns, if I go today, tomorrow someone else will go and then we call each other on the phone to give updates on his [father] condition” (Alice, OF).

Except for Christophe, this was also discussed mostly by the older women who have had several experiences of taking care of the sick. Societal ideologies about the ‘woman’s domain’ being involved with domestic duties, childcare responsibilities and taking care of the sick and elderly persist, up to this day. When children are ill it is usually the mother who would take time off work to look after that child. As Cooper (1972: 5) argues, the family is an ‘ideological conditioning device’ where children, and as feminists argue, girls, learn to conform to the societal norms and values, where girls are ‘conditioned’ by their parents to be submissive and to be feminine, and assuming responsibilities acceptable to their gender.

Very few participants mentioned the responsibility of providing food, clothing and shelter to the family. This shows that the participants value certain responsibilities more than others. Some of them wish that certain responsibilities were being taken and they focused on those that they consider as lacking. Others focused on those that they consider of great

importance. Participants stressed that family members should take their responsibilities and show their familial obligations.

### **The negotiation of obligations**

Obligations in families can at times involve negotiation. When negotiation does happen in the participants' families it can be explicit. This type of negotiation usually takes place between spouses, especially where finances are concerned, "we negotiate, we talk a lot, we discuss like, regarding money" (Lorraine, OF). However, the research was not about horizontal relationships so there isn't sufficient data to discuss about explicit negotiation between spouses. Implicit negotiation tends to take place between younger adults and their parents, usually their mothers:

"with my mother, mainly, if I don't want to do something today I would tell her I would do it the next weekend or something like that, if I don't cook today then I will cook tomorrow but I need to tell her, I need to tell her in advance, negotiate, but do it in advance [...] just to avoid the drama" (Teresa, YF).

What is interesting in the case of some young adults is that they tend to do certain things, not necessarily because it has been negotiated, but to avoid drama, as in the case of Teresa. Also, even when the participants noted that there was some sort of negotiation taking place, this was not necessarily the case, in the sense that those involved believed that they were involved in negotiation, when in fact they were just being told what to do, or they did what they wanted to do. For example, Josh thinks that there is some form of negotiation, when in fact he is being told what to do, and he does it to avoid the 'nagging':

“at times, it can be negotiated, like you are able to do this, you do this, you are good at that, you do that, so it is a form of negotiation, so just do it to avoid the nagging” (Josh, YM).

Another example is in the case of Alice, whose children do what they want to do:

“[son] might tell me he is doing the gardening, [other son] says he would do the dishes, they have a choice, and then I would say I will be in the kitchen and [youngest son] would come with me in the kitchen” (Alice, OF).

So basically, there was no negotiation *per se*, between Alice and her children, just the children doing what they want to do. Or someone is told to do something because that person has the reputation of being able to that particular thing like in the case of Josh, and Daniel, “this has always been the case, I have my duties that I have grown up with” (YM).

The analysis of the data reveals that often, obligations in the Seychelles are *not* negotiated. This contrasts with Finch and Mason’s argument that responsibilities between kin are not the straightforward products of rules of obligation but are the products of negotiation (1993: 60). By negotiation they mean that the course of action which a person takes emerges out of his or her interaction with other people (Finch and Mason, 1993: 60). This is not necessarily the case in the participants’ families. Indeed, responsibilities *are* straightforward products of rules of obligations. Implicit negotiation still involves some communication and interaction but for most of the participants this is not the case in practice. In practice, there is a strong sense of obligation for family members to take their responsibility and there is also what can be referred to as the ‘expectation of obligation’. So rather than negotiation there is *expectation*, as “most of the time things just fall into place” (John, OM) and “in my family [...] these things would be automatic” (Jaques, OM):

“each of us does something and each of us knows what we are expected to do” (Suzy, OF),

“instead of forcing people, it is sort of there, it is the norm that is expected, and we abide to it naturally, that it is a way of life [...] that is the norm, it is expected of me [...] it is a common understanding, again, it is what is right and what is wrong, we expect that, [...]” (Ian, OM).

Certain older adults, especially the males even think that parents should impose their wishes on their children, that children are told what to do:

“I don’t believe we should negotiate, the father and the mother should be able to tell the children what to do” (Dean, OM).

Morgan reminds us that “parents lay down the rules, the normative expectations and the appropriate sanctions and they can define the reasons for these expectations” (1975: 111). This issue of expectation is further stressed upon when participants were asked who is the one who tends to assume control in situations where support is required. Most of the women said that it is either themselves or an older sister who tends to be in in control.

Women who were in control include Hendrika, Chantal, Gemma, “I was the one who was in control and up till now, I am still in control”; and Alice, “my father has always told me to take control because I am more outspoken”. In cases of when the older women themselves were not in control, another woman was in control. For example, Loraine’s mother takes control “most of the time she is the one who takes over or directs things, like doing official things”. In the case of the men, it was either their older sister or their mother:

“it is part of the family culture that the elder one makes the decision, and this has stayed with us, so she [sister] is the one who always takes the decision and we listen” (Dominic, OM),

“typical of her [mum], very often I tell her ‘you are going a bit too far, you are interfering too much’, but that’s her” (John, OM).

In the case of the younger generation it was mostly their mothers who were in control:

“mum has always been the one to take control, she has the final say, to advice on the final decision, most of the time it has been mum” (Teresa, YF),

“mum is the head of the family, because firstly, she is the eldest, so she is the one who is in control of all decisions” (Molly, YF).

When these women take control, the participants agreed that things get done and go efficiently. Basically, for eight of the ten older women, there is someone who takes control, it might either be themselves or their mother or sister. The same can be said for the older men, though three of them did not answer the question. When asked the question ‘who is the one in control [...]’, they thought about it for a little while, but then shook their head, not wanting to discuss this further. As Bryman, notes, often the refusal of answering certain questions will be based on a feeling that certain questions delve into private realms, which participants do not wish to make public (2008: 123). Taking all of this in a post-colonial perspective, this issue of the mother being in control might be another legacy of slavery. As Scarr argues, during slavery the mother was the one who ruled the household even when it included a man or men (2000: 29) and many times the men were split from their family, many being taken on the other islands to work on the plantations (Scarr, 2000) and the women were left behind and eventually took charge of all the family’s decisions.

Interactions do take place at times when the woman who is in charge is coordinating who should do what, and family members end up doing what is asked of them. Like Hannah suggested, “I think it is, partly negotiated, and partly expected for it to be done”. The participants noted that it is typical for that particular person to take control and when a certain situation takes place, say a death or an illness, everyone knows that this person is in charge and they would respond positively to that person:

“one of my older sisters, usually she is the one who takes control, she is the first child, the eldest and she has the strength to be able to cope with those things, whereas the rest of us, we are weaker” (Olivia, OF),

“my sister handled [their mother’s funeral] and she just delegated what so and so had to do and it went smoothly” (Christophe, OM),

“it was automatic, my mother assumes the responsibilities of washing the clothes because she lives closer to the hospital” (Josh, YM).

At times, there is not even the need for one to take the lead because everyone already knows what is expected of them as noted by Maria “[aunty] was the one trying to lead, but it’s just that everybody knew what they were doing”.

Before concluding, it is important to note that one of my research questions carried certain assumptions that I did not find happening in practice. Obligations are not always negotiated, family members tend to automatically know what is expected of them, and that usually there is someone who assumes control. Even if obligations are not negotiated most of the time, family members take their obligations seriously, to the extent that they know what is expected of them, and act on these expectations. In this case, my research has moved beyond my initial research questions and it was not limited by them.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter has firstly discussed the various family structures that can be found in the participants' families. These include the common ones which are nuclear, single-parent and extended. It has also discussed less common family structures like those who grew up with a grand-parent and those living on their own. The chapter has also focussed on the Seychellois Creole family and how it is characterised by racial, power and gender issues. This section also discussed the matrifocality of the Seychellois family. Racial issues were focused on mainly by the older participants, who have lived experiences of racism, which they argued was a direct result of colonialism. Another result of colonialism was seen to be the absent father phenomenon, which was discussed mostly by the younger generation who argued that they do not consider their absent father as a family member.

Subsequent sections focused on family responsibilities. Several participants chose to focus on responsibilities which they identified as particularly important to them and which they found to be lacking in their family situation. For some, especially mothers their focus was on their children, especially those who are still dependent on them. Some fathers focused on the emotional aspect rather than the disciplinary side where their fatherly duties are concerned. Some mothers also felt responsible for the care of their elderly parents. The younger generation did not focus on this responsibility. There was a consensus amongst the participants that familial responsibilities and duties should be taken by the family rather than having to rely on the state.

The final section focused on the negotiation of obligations. This section discussed that there are some negotiations taking place between family members, which are mostly explicit. However, in most cases the data revealed that there is no negotiation of obligations, that indeed responsibilities between family members are products of rules of obligation.

There is the expectation rather than the negotiation of obligations. Most participants were aware of what their duties are and what is expected of them. So, it can be argued here that the second research question carried assumptions that I did not find happening in practice, and if they did, were not happening frequently. Several of the issues that have been discussed by the participants can be argued to be the direct result of colonisation and slavery. Whilst this chapter has focused on some family practices and values the next chapter will focus solely on things that family do, which are family practices.

## Chapter Six

### Analysis – Doing family in the Seychelles

#### **Introduction**

Jones and Hackett discuss the importance of family activities in the development of a family identity (2010: 61). They argue that the repetition of certain family activities and routines meant that they took on the quality of a family ritual that was anticipated and welcomed (Jones and Hackett, 2010: 62). Such activities include visiting a parent every Sunday such as Olivia (OF) or phoning a parent every day such as Lorraine (OF). According to Jones and Hackett (2010) these activities become established family practices (Morgan, 1999, 2011) that took on an important role in not only establishing, but also maintaining family relationships. Other family practices include providing support to each other. Helping family members have also become established family practices and it is one way to keep the family active. Certain family practices have ritualistic characteristics which are being practiced by many Seychellois.

Family practices are not discrete but connect with and relate to values, sites and practices more broadly (Morgan, 1999). For example, family practices may be related to and/or understood as ethnic or religious practices (e.g. going to church every Sunday, as in the case of Olivia, Tania, Suzy, Chantal, Maria, Jaques and Ian); as gendered practices (e.g. “this is more sensible for a daughter than for a son [to bathe an elderly parent]” as noted by Tania); as age practices (e.g. taking care of the elderly) (Morgan, 1999: 17-18). These practices have hence become part of our culture and are passed on to our children. Family practices are also rooted and created in an individual’s life history and experiences (Ribbens

McCarthy and Edwards, 2011: 89). For example, John has inculcated into his children the practice to clean the house every Saturday, as this was also inculcated in him when he was a child, “when I was a growing up, every Saturday I would be cleaning the whole house, from the windows to the floors” [chore given by grandmother]. This has become an established family practices in John’s family.

### **Family practices**

#### Sunday – family day!

Certain practices can be argued to be the product of colonisation. The abolishment of the flogging of females, limiting the daily hours of work and ensuring that slaves were given a rest day on Sunday were among the measures recommended by the colonial office in May 1823 (McAteer, 2000: 7). Taking this in consideration, this might be a reason why Sunday has been identified as ‘family day’ in the Seychelles. Spending Sundays with family members has become an established family practice in many Seychellois families. This can involve having lunch together, having a cup of tea in the late afternoon together, or going to the beach for a swim or having a picnic. Many people refer to Sunday as ‘family day’ such as Teresa (YF), “whether it is going to the beach or just taking the kids out for a drive, it is very much considered family day on Sunday”. Dean (OM) must spend every Sunday with his relatives, where he will meet them at his mother’s house, “every week, on Sunday, because of our tradition, we go home, we see mum”. This has become a tradition, an established family practice:

“this is very important, every Sunday, unless we have somewhere else to go or our mum would tell us she won’t be here on that Sunday so we don’t go there, but apart

from that, every Sunday I must go see her, like during the week I call her to see how she is doing and on Sundays I go and see her, this is important to me” Olivia (OF).

Visiting elderly parents every Sunday is valuable for both the older adults and their elderly mother. The older adults get the chance to spend time with their mother and other siblings, who are too busy during the work week to make such trips, and the mother gets the chance to see her children as well as her grandchildren.

### Family visits

The Seychelles is a small island state where it is very easy for people to meet each other. It takes, for example, around an hour to drive from the north to the south of Mahé and because most of the main roads are found on the coast, this means a person can drive around the whole island in under two hours, if that person does not stop to enjoy any of the wonderful sights. Considering its size then the family practices of meeting frequently is made possible. Family practices pertinent to some Seychellois families involve visiting other family members as often as possible, and such visits involve chatting, what Cheal (2002) refers to as 'family talk':

“the things we do for each other, like visiting each other, sharing little bit of news, talking on the phone almost every day, like my aunties, it is a must to at least call them twice a week, my aunts and my cousins, the ones I am closest to, I will call them sometimes almost every day [...] to share things and to know how they are and if there’s any need for help. Like my mum, I call her every day to make sure she is okay, make sure she has money, she has food in the house. My aunts, just to check

on their health and see how they are doing and, I don't know if I am just curious or I am concerned, I always have an update of what they are up to" (Lorraine, OF),

"even those who are overseas, we talk because of technology, even if you are far you are close, you can talk to them, see them and we are always keeping into contact" (Dominic, OM).

Morgan uses the term 'family' as an adjective to refer to sets of practices which deal in some way with ideas of parenthood, kinship and the obligations which are associated with these practices (1996: 11), for example visiting a grandparent is very important:

"every day I go visit them, it is like my second home, I visit my grandma, I am always welcome, sometimes when I do not go, she [grandmother] would ask, like, where am I, why haven't I come to visit them, things like that so I feel that I am welcome there every day" (Fabrice, YM),

"because I am free during the day I would go and visit her [grandma], I'll spend the day with her until my aunty gets home, and I would heat up her lunch" (Olie, YF).

Bott argues that it is families who see each other frequently where one finds most practical support being given, because frequent contact affords the opportunity for pressure to be put upon individuals 'to keep up their kinship obligations' (1957: 133). Keeping in contact with family members can be achieved in two different ways. The first one is achieved by physically seeing other relatives and spending some time with them. The second one is contact over the phone. Physical contact is considered as more important than contact over the phone for certain reasons. One reason is that some families do not have phones (landline or mobile). Another reason is that in some areas where families do not have landlines but do have mobile phones the phone signal is extremely poor or even non-existent. A final reason

is that many elderly relatives are not too keen on using phones especially if they have little to no trust in modern technology.

Being able to contact a relative by the phone makes having to physically meet them futile since they can already communicate. Some see family members more often, others regularly, others on certain occasions and some daily. Some do not see other family members at all. There are various reasons why relatives see some members more often than others. It must be noted that most participants have some relatives living overseas which obviously limit the physical contact they have. Since this section is about family practices and family practices involve the 'dailiness' of family life, I will focus on the participants who see each other daily. Family practices also involve the stress on regularities and repetition (routine), so I will discuss the participants who see each other regularly as well.

#### Seeing family members daily

There are participants who see family members daily. Here I consider those who are not co-resident. As Morgan (2011) argues, thinking of family practices should involve 'a sense of the everyday'. For example, Tania (OF) sees her children every day, even the one who has moved out, because at noon they have lunch together as they "are still close even though she [daughter] has moved out". This has become established family practices for Tania and her daughter. John (OM) also sees his mother almost every day. His mother lives in town and as he works close to town he gets the opportunity to go and see her. Vivienne (YF) also sees her mother daily as they both work in the same building "I go to her office every day and she comes to my office every day". So, working in the same building facilitates this practice of them seeing each other every day. For Vivienne, this is important considering her young son lives with her mother during the week, so having her mother in

the same building makes it easier to ask and talk about her son, knowing all the daily things he is involved in whilst he is at his grandmother's. According to Cheal, 'family practices consist of all the ordinary, everyday actions that people do, insofar as they are intended to have some effect on another family member' (2002: 12) for example, in the case of Gemma (OF) who visits her mother every day:

"I get off the bus at her place before going to my place, and every day I make sure, if I finish work in the morning, I stop there at her place, I go see her and ask her how she is, then I leave and go home".

For Gemma, this is important as she feared that her mother might die at any moment, so she is making the most of seeing her while she is still alive. It must be noted that there has been a couple of deaths in her family recently. Stopping at her mother's house everyday has become so routinized, that if Gemma does not stop over for one day, her mother would get worried and would think something is wrong. In fact, one day she did not stop at her mother's place after a night shift as she was tired and wanted to go home to sleep. She received a telephone call from her mother, who was very worried. Her mother was checking if everything was fine because Gemma hasn't turned up that day. So, for both Gemma and certainly her mother, the predictability of routine is important. Any change in the routine brings a lot of worry for Gemma's mother. So, for both Gemma and her mother, Gemma's daily stop at her mother's house has become established family practices. As Sclater argues a focus on family practices highlights the importance of everyday activities that involve social actors in doing family (2012: 126).

It is important to note that seeing a relative daily does not necessarily mean that these family members are close and want to see each other every day. For example, Steve is not particularly close to his father and yet he sees him every day because they share a car to go



to work. Neil sees most of his maternal relatives daily as well as they are neighbours. This includes his brother, who lives with him. Neil is annoyed with his brother because he is a drug addict:

“I am not frustrated with him [his father who has been incarcerated for drug trafficking], but with my brother, I am very frustrated, it is just like, ‘dude pull up your socks’ like the saying goes and get back to reality, to life”.

His mother is being affected as well and this makes him frustrated towards his brother. He said that his parents had huge expectations for his brother, who went to university, and they even gave him a plot of land to build his own house on but then he became a drug addict. His brother is currently unemployed and spends his time taking drugs.

Stephy (YF) sees her mother every day and most of the weekends, she is at her mother’s house even if she has her own place now. She would go to her mother’s place after work and would have a cup of tea with her mother and sisters under the veranda and talk. Having a cup of tea in the afternoon is something that is done routinely in most of the participants’ families. As Morgan suggests ‘a sense of family is itself reconstituted through engaging in these practices’ (2011: 10). It has been argued that it is a practice Seychellois have inherited from the British when the Seychelles was a colony of Britain.

#### Seeing family members regularly

Morgan (2011) asserts that family practice involves ‘a sense of the regular’. Tessa sees her parents every Friday, considering she spends the week at her in-laws, so when it is the weekend she leaves and spends the weekend at her parents’. Her mother-in-law is the one who takes care of her daughter from Monday to Thursday and her mother takes over on

Friday. It is hence easier for her to just stay at her parents' in the weekend and give her in-laws a break, according to her. It has become a habit for Fabrice, (YM) to visit his relatives where he used to live every weekend. As Morgan argues 'family practices are not simply practices that are done by family members in relation to other family members, but they are also constitutive of that family "membership" at the same time' (2011: 32). So, there are certain things that are done within the family circle, which remind family members that they are part of this particular family.

These family practices keep a sense of the active (Morgan, 2011). Some see family members less regularly but as "Seychelles is very small, so we tend to bump into each other all the time" Evans (YM). However, seeing family members is not a family practice that happens in all families as certain family members are not seen. It is fair to say that not seeing certain family members is, to some participants, family practices. Or rather, avoiding seeing other family members has become family practices. For example, Tania (OF) sees her siblings rarely and they do not have a good relationship at all. Brenda (YF) could not even remember the last time she saw some family members as she noted that "we do not frequent them, we do not mix, we each live separately" and she might only see them passing by in town. Tony (YM) sees his half siblings very rarely:

"because my father has his [other children], I have two half-brothers and two half-sisters and since the beginning of this year I have said to myself, I will try my best to avoid them because they tend to abuse my position and my kind heartedness, they tend to abuse it too much".

Pierre, (OM) doesn't see his siblings often. It has been two years since he last saw one of his sisters who happens to live on the same island as him. Pierre believes that this has to do with the death of their mother when they were younger, and the siblings were separated. He was

the youngest child (4 years old) and was sent to live with his grandparents as his father could not take care of him. His older siblings lived with other relatives and he rarely met them. So, for Pierre and his siblings not seeing each other is something which has become completely normal:

“I think it has to do with the split we had since we were kids, we do not have much to share, what can we discuss, I can ask you how you are and so on, and there are others like my two sisters who are closer to each other, they are almost the same age, I think it has to do with us being separated since we were kids”.

They do not spend any special occasions together although they might bump into each other in town, so any chance of them seeing each other is coincidental and never planned.

However, for some participants not seeing certain family members is something that is not within their control. This is because those family members are living overseas. For example, Tessa (YF) said “my dad’s sister who lives in Scotland, one in Switzerland, my mum’s sister in South Africa, my cousins in UK and then that one in Australia”. Laurent (YM) also has “an aunty in Australia, it has been ten years since I have seen her, and one of my uncles, he is working on the outer islands”. However, these family members have developed other family practices in order to stay in contact. For example, there are specific days that Dominic would Skype his siblings and father who are living in England. They agree on a specific time as well considering the different time zones. So, even if certain family practices are lost, they are replaced by others and some of these are facilitated by modern technology.

## **Providing support**

Providing support to each other are family practices in some families. When family members practice the family practices of providing support, they are showing their commitment to each other. As Gubrium (1987) argues, the image of the family is constructed as a source of support and caregiving. When family members respond to help that is asked and then provide the necessary support, they do so because they have a level of commitment to each other and one way of displaying this is by responding positively. It must be noted that all the participants taking part in the research agreed that relatives should be the first line of support. So, there is some sort of moral code that has been established by family members and they understand the implication of familial duties and obligations. Responding positively demonstrates that firstly some sort of moral code has been established by family members and secondly because a certain level of commitment has been established between them. Commitment will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The analysis of the data reveals that all the participants has either supported or received support from relatives, revealing that indeed there is a moral duty to respond. There is however one exception, and that is Sam. Sam is a 54-year-old divorcee who currently lives alone. His son stays with him on most weekends as per the custody agreement. Sam's mother died when he was 18 years old. He did not receive any support from the siblings of his mother after her death, nor from his older siblings who have immigrated to another country nor from his estranged father:

“None, [support] whatsoever, I always tell people today my skin is rough, hardened and everything, it's because I have been through stormy waters like you wouldn't believe and I got no support from anyone at all, not even my mothers' sisters and there were two sisters [...] I was really taking it upon myself to do stuff by trial and

error as I went along, yes, that was the way it was and no help from any of my mother's relatives, none whatsoever, I was really by myself, probably made me what I am today".

This could be because when his mother was alive she kept to herself, "my mum was a loner, by herself", and hence no commitment was formed between his mother and her siblings to the extent that when she passed away her siblings maintained the distance from her orphaned children. They are so estranged from each other that Sam says:

"today if I meet them [his aunts] on the street, for example, they are like strangers to me and I would not look at them, not because I hate them or anything, no, but because they do not seem to be relatives to me".

Apart from the commitment he feels towards his son he gives the impression of stubbornly resisting any commitment to other relatives. In fact, he mentions that he has no family hence no obligations apart to his son. The only contact he seems to have with his sister is occasionally, and he has no ties to his maternal aunts. He was the only participant who couldn't suggest ways that his relatives assist each other and for him that was a very difficult question. However, it must be noted that after the death of his mother Sam took care of his younger sister for many years, so it would be wrong to say that mutual aid between relatives was unimportant in his life. The fact that he took care of his sister for many years showed that he was also committed to her in some way. His sister must have meant a lot to him considering all the sacrifices he was willing to make for her:

"I felt that I had to do something not for myself, but for my little sister, to make sure that she got a good education, I took it upon myself and I said, ok, this is what I have to do and ensure that she gets a good education and she gets food, she gets clothing and everything, and it was scary, but I took up the challenge, I said I am going to do

that even if I have to sacrifice my life for that, sacrifice my youth, no discotheque, nothing at all”.

Sam however, was the only participant who felt like this. But then again even if he said that he did not get any support from his relatives, he did mention that he had a sister who he could rely on even if she was not present physically in the Seychelles as she lived in another country:

“when I realise that the responsibility was on me, and for a time what I did, I relied a lot on my older sister who was in [country] at the time and she would direct things from a distance, I was a head here, head of a family of two and my older sister who was in [country], she was a very good woman and as she has settled in [country] she would not come back here, she was married and everything so she would, financially she would help me, she would send money and we would at the time we did not have emails or stuff like that, later on we sort of emailed every day”.

So even if he is adamant that he did not receive help, he did. He is also committed to his younger sister because he refused to ask for her financial aid when he found out he had cancer and needed treatment overseas:

“I know she was going through a lot of financial difficulties, I could not possibly impose that on her and she was, she wanted to help, and I said no, no, you are going to hurt yourself, your businesses and everything but moral support yes, I got that from her”.

Furthermore, he makes sure that he sees his sister and her family once every month. This reveals that he values his relationship with his sister and now they have the family practices of meeting once every month. So even if Sam feels that he is a loner, who does not receive

a lot of support and he is not really committed to other family members (except to his son) this is not necessarily the case. He is also committed to his sister because if he was not, they would not have the established family practices of meeting every month. It must be noted that he is the one who would take the bus and go to his sister's place, so this monthly meeting must be important to him as he is willing to put this effort to see his sister and her children. Going to his sister's place is seen as an effort considering Sam lives in the North and his sister lives in the South of Mahé.

Finch argues that family relationships are regarded as providing structures of support which are uniquely reliable (1989: 14) and the question of who is involved is diverse (Finch, 1989). There is considerable diversity of experience among Finch and Mason's study population (1993: 31) and this is reflected in my own research. For example, Suzy has received financial help from her aunt and her sister. She has received childcare support from her mother. She has received help and still does from her siblings when her sons have been and are sick. She has received help from other family members when her father was diagnosed with a terminal illness and when he passed away. She has given financial help to a cousin who didn't have money to buy milk for her baby. She has given personal care to her uncle when he was sick, and she anticipates that when her mother is no longer independent she will take care of her.

At the opposite end is Hendrika who seems to be helping almost all of those around her, but her help is not necessarily being reciprocated. She seems to find herself on the giving rather than the receiving end. It can be argued that Hendrika feels the moral duty to help relatives but some of them do not feel the same towards her, as she doesn't seem to experience reciprocity. She has asked for help before, but she did not receive it:

“[...] once bitten twice shy, and I remember, I asked my brother during the day if he would like to take mum to the hospital [...] I can bring her down when I’m going to work, drop her there [...] I can’t leave the office, but you’re off, can you pick her up and drop her back at home and [...] sometimes they forget that mum is not just mine, she is also their mother [...] and from then on I never, never, never asked for help, if I had to take my mum to the hospital I will always take her to the hospital myself and organise a taxi to take her back [...]” (OF).

However, it must be noted that when she asks help from her daughter she does receive it, which shows that commitment has developed between her and her daughter. The flow of support between parents and children is one type of support that is very common in the Seychelles.

#### The flow of support between parents and children

Someone you rely on in the Seychelles context is called ‘my right hand’ and usually this is an adult child. This is from my own observation as an insider. As it has been argued insiders have claimed that their familiarity to the group provided a nuanced and unique insight about underrepresented and colonized groups to which they belonged (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). This adult child who is referred to as ‘my right hand’ is usually one that a parent knows he or she can rely on for support. Usually the parent is an elderly and the adult child is middle-aged and usually a grandparent and commitment has already been developed between them. Usually that middle-aged adult child is a daughter.

It is mostly daughters who provide personal care for their parents, which involves bathing them, cooking for them and at times feeding them. There is a small proportion of children providing other supports for their parents, for example financially, but in the



Seychelles, this is not common as the elderly receives a pension and social security automatically when they reach 63 years old. As argued by Finch, adult children are favoured over other relatives and they are expected to assist when it is required of them (1989: 37). Silverstein *et al.*, (2002) add on that parents and children are a major source of support for each other throughout the life course, where early in life parents give more and later in life parents receive more. In the case of children early in life they receive more and later in life, they give more (Silverstein *et al.*, 2002). Most people acknowledge that parents have a right to make demands upon their adult children and that most children will do their best to meet those demands (Finch, 1989: 38).

However, there are instances of young adult children providing support to their parents who are still considered 'young'. For example, Hendrika notes that she doesn't want to be a burden to her two daughters as she feels that in some ways her own mother has been a burden, so she would rather be placed in a home when she is not capable of taking care of herself. She feels a sense of guilt in being so dependent on her younger daughter, who still lives with her that she wants her daughter to leave the country for a while and go for postgraduate education overseas. Hendrika's reliance on her daughter who is still a young adult, and Hendrika, who is still seen as an independent businesswoman is not a reflection of the cultural discourse and practices that shape family life in Seychelles, where it is common for young adults to rely on their parents rather than their independent parent/s relying on them. The persistent cultural discourse is that parents can only rely on their adult children when they are old and are incapable of taking care of themselves. This can clearly be reflected in the answers to the question of who the participants rely on, and Hendrika is one of the few older participants who relies on her adult child:

“I know I can rely on her for anything, if she can’t do she can’t do, but I know I can always call her for anything or for a small gossip, I would always call her and tell her whereas [other daughter] she is more the serious person and she might be telling me ‘mum, I can’t talk to you now, I have to go’, things like that’ [...] she is the one that I can always talk to and she understands me and I understand her [...] (OF).

In fact, when Hendrika’s own mother was younger and Hendrika was around the same age that her youngest daughter is now, she was the one relying on her mother and now, she is the one relying on her daughter. The same thing is happening with Tania who relies a lot on her daughters. Finch and Mason (1993) argue that ‘we get a strong indication of how the daughters’ identities as ‘moral beings’ are constructed through the ways that they support their mothers’. Though financial support is important in the reciprocal relationships between mothers and daughters, the close interdependencies between the mothers and daughters have emerged through the ways that they each help other out in other ways, such as in a time of crisis as discussed by Holdsworth, (2007: 67), for example Teresa being there for her mother when she found out that her father was having an affair.

Mothers also continue to be an important source of support for their daughters, (Finch, 1989: 37) especially when the daughters have children of their own. This is consistent with the Seychellois culture as a post-colonial society, where when families were split, children were left with their mother (Scarr, 2000). It can be argued that one of a mother’s moral duties is to assist her child no matter how old the child is, if she can do it. For example, Vivienne’s son spends the week with her mother as her mother lives closer to his school. Sandra knows that she can rely on her mother when she is busy at work, to get her son from the nursery. It must be noted that these two grandmothers are in full time employment and have other younger dependent children. Parents do not only provide support

where childcare is concerned but also other types, such as financially. For example, John said that his mother is the one person he knows he can rely on financially. Some participants noted that their mother is the first person they would turn to, bypassing even spouses. For example, Gemma remarked that “for me the first person would be my mother”:

“because she is that person who I know is the first, she is my mother, she has given birth to me, so I think she is the first person that I need to go see first and I expect her to help me if she can, she will never tell me no, I’m not saying that my mother must help me, but her advice always comes first and her advice is important” (OF).

Even if Gemma is a grown woman with adult children of her own (and a partner) she relies on the advice of her mother and for her this comes first. She discusses how she would even rely on her mother when a child is sick, asking for an herbal remedy before going to the doctor and would call an ambulance only after her mother has given her the go ahead.

However, it was mostly the younger cohort who mentioned that the person they relied the most on was their mother. They can be referred to as independent children who depend on their mothers. For example, Teresa noted that she relies on her mother because;

“she has always been there for me from the very beginning and we were always close, so it comes naturally to me to rely on her for something”.

Molly also relies on her mother because she believes that her mother is strong, very sympathetic and she listens “my mum is a rock, she is solid, when she cracks she cracks, but she is solid mostly”, so she would rather rely on her mother than anyone else. Almost all the young men rely on their mothers except for Tony whose mother died when he was born – though he does rely on his aunt who is his mother-figure. Most of the young men mentioned how they rely on their mother:

“If I have a problem I would talk to my mother, not my father” (Laurent, YM),

“My mother, of course. she has always been there regardless of what type of help or situation or matter that has ever come up, she is an understanding person, a very kind person who regardless if she doesn’t really have the means she’ll just find a way to help, basically a person you can depend on” (Steve, YM).

So, there is still a prevalent reliance on mothers, especially on sons’ sides. As Franda argues, the mother-son tie is very close in the Seychelles (1982: 41). However, the data is not representative enough to show whether sons rely more on their mothers than daughters do. Nevertheless, my data reveals that more sons do rely on their mothers compared to daughters. Even if Finch argues that ‘there is the question of mother-daughter relationships, which are said to have a special quality and status which has ramifications across the whole of family life’ (1989: 40) sons also do rely on their mothers and more research is needed in this area. Some sons who are participants in this research has or has had special mother-son relationships. This include Christophe, Ian (whose elderly mother lived with him until she passed away), Dean and Cyril (who even stays in hospital with his mother when she is sick), Jaques (who used to drive his mother to her dialysis three times a week until she succumbed to her illness), Travis and Josh (both openly claimed they would be willing to take care of their elderly mother). This however does not necessarily go against the findings about gender and care as Travis and Josh are both only sons and hence do not have any female siblings who will provide care for their mother.

Some of the young people who have a family of their own also still rely on their mother and for most of them this is related to help with their own children. For example, Brenda trusts her mother and sees her as being the one person that can replace her when she

is not at home due to work commitment as a social worker, to fulfil her own motherly duties towards her children:

“I trust my mum, especially with the responsibility of my children because I know she is there and she can, it is more convenient for her than other members”.

Meryl (YF) notes that “even at this age I still rely on her” as she knows that her mother “has my back, what she is doing, it must be out of love”. Meryl receives support from her mother and in turn provides help to her grandmother.

It must be noted that most of the younger participants rely on someone who happens to be of the female gender – usually their mother. Eight out of the ten young men rely on their mother (and Tony relies on his aunt, who is his guardian). Only one young man relies on his father. Six young women rely on their mother. One relies on her sister, another one relies on her aunt, and another one relies on her husband. Ollie relies on her father (her mother is deceased). In the case of the older participants, the person that they rely on was significantly different from the younger generation. Only one older woman relies on her mother, two rely on their daughters, one relies on her sister, one on her husband, one on her father and four do not rely on anyone. In the case of the older male participants, one relies on his mother, two on their sisters, one on his wife, one relies on his brother, one on his children and four do not rely on anyone. This reveals that vertical relationships remain more important, especially to the younger generation. Spouses are the ones that are not really relied on and they are the ones the older participants are less likely to turn to when they need help.

### Help from parents to adult children

Whilst the previous section focused on support *between* parents and children this section will discuss help *from* parents *to* their adult children. Help is something that is practiced, essentially 'doing'. In responding positively to help, a family member is essentially 'doing family' (Morgan, 1999). All the participants agreed that when help is needed by a relative that relative should receive help, and this is one of the most important family responsibilities. However, only certain family members can ask for help and will receive that help. Consistent with Finch and Mason's (1993) argument, help is given because the person in need happens to be a relative, so help flows from a sense of family duty and obligation. At times, the sense of duty is towards someone else rather than the person (Finch and Mason, 1993) who is helped. For example, Teresa, Stephy and Brenda help their mother by taking care of their grandmother. There are however limits to what is done for relatives, for example, Dean said, "I won't lend him [brother] money to build his house, there are banks for this".

Finch and Mason argue that responsibilities towards parents or children are not negotiated in a vacuum when a need arises, but are built upon a history of the relationship between parent and child, into which the biography of each gets incorporated and gives significance to the form which responsibilities might take (1993: 26) and this is also the responsibilities towards grandparents, not just parents, particularly those who have been involved in the care of their grandchildren or even brought up the grandchildren themselves. For example, Pierre's grandparents' death affected him more than the death of his father. Pierre was brought up by his grandparents. Meryl claimed that her grandmother is the one person she is willing to do anything for, and there are things only her grandmother can ask of her, which are unacceptable for others to ask. This reflects Finch and Mason's view where

the past is as important as the present in understanding how people come to accept family responsibilities (1993: 28).

Several older parents believe that even if their children have reached a certain age, this doesn't mean that their responsibility towards them decrease. They note that some responsibilities are rather replaced by others though some of them remained. One of those responsibilities is to respond to help when their adult children request such help. This could be financial help, helping an adult daughter when she is pregnant, or providing help with childcare.

#### *Financial help*

Some older participants commented that it is acceptable to help their adult children financially. For example, Alice said that she finds it as “acceptable for my grown-up child to come to me for financial help” but it all depends on what they are going to do with the money. For Alice, there are certain circumstances that she would help her adult children financially:

“if you are working and you find yourself stuck and you have a problem, I would help you, so that you do not go and steal or go and ask someone else, this is how I look at it, but if you work and you waste your money and then come depend on your parents, this is not acceptable”.

Ian also believes that it is alright for parents to help grown up children financially but like Alice, it depends on certain circumstances. For him, if his grown-up children are still studying he feels that he must provide for them as “they do not have an income to survive, then we should be supporting them”.

To find out what were the normative views of the participants with regards to helping young adults financially I used a vignette (see Appendix 1: Vignette 3) which was about a young couple needing financial support in order to put a deposit on a mortgage to build their house. There was a clear distinction between the answers given by the older parents, who happen to be parents of young adults and the younger participants who might find themselves in this situation.

Two thirds of the young participants said that the young couple should save. Some of them even mentioned that the couple should cut back on their spending – if they each have a car then sell one. In contrast, only two of the older men and two of the older women said that the young couple should save. Most of the older generation noted that it is a parent's duty to help the young couple and if it was one of their own children they would lend the money, on the condition that the money should be given back later, without interest. So, the younger generation are asserting their independence by refusing to rely on their parents for help and taking matters in their own hands, whereas the older generation still want to feel needed, so it was acceptable for their children to rely on them.

### *Help to pregnant daughter*

Mothers also help their daughters when they are pregnant. In the Seychelles pregnancy is an experience that does not involve just the young expectant couple, but it involves also the mother of the expectant daughter, and at times the mother is more involved than the expectant father. One of the main responsibilities of a mother is to help her daughter when she is pregnant, to be there during the pregnancy, during and after childbirth:



“she [mum] would mostly direct me on what I am supposed to buy, what not to buy, how much I should buy, why I should not buy such and such, she told me I have to buy those little dresses, you know the ones that are locally sewn, she said I need to have seven of these, one white for the birth, one blue for the next day, and then all the crib blankets must be white for the first day, and the next day another colour, I just listened to her, but I did not buy those dresses like she told me, I only got a white one for the birth [...] when I was in the labour room with the baby she was there” (Sandra, YF),

“she wanted me to drink those herbal things, to clean inside, she told me your child will rot with impetigo. I need to drink herbal medicines to clean inside, [...], like when the baby has the hiccups she told me to put a small thread on his forehead and I asked her how that will stop him from hiccupping” (Sandra, YF).

There is a strong cultural discourse around the role of the mother, the grandmother-to-be. It is significant to note here that when I am referring to the grandmother-to-be, I am referring to the maternal one. Paternal grandmothers-to-be are not too involved as maternal ones are. Expectant grandmothers usually attend the ante-natal classes whether the son-in-law is present or not (and usually for their daughter's first child as well as for other pregnancies). They are the ones who would help their pregnant daughter with her 'trousseau' which is a term used for the baby's outfits and sheets for the cot. It is obligatory that the new-born is dressed in white and the mother would stress on the significance of this. Certain baby items are not bought until the pregnant daughter is 28 weeks pregnant – it is considered as bad luck to buy the crib, for example, before 28 weeks. New-born babies are not dressed in yellow in case they develop jaundice (medically not true). The mother would make sure the daughter eats well and certain foods are eaten more during her pregnancy. This include soup made

from the leaves of the moringa tree, which is rich in iron; lentils which is to help the expectant mother make breastmilk; some herbal teas to ‘clean inside’ and absolutely no spicy food because that would give the baby eye problems (medically not true). Finally, the mother is usually the one who is expected to be present with the daughter when she gives birth as there is still some belief that men should not be in the delivery room. A mother’s presence during and after pregnancy is as important to many young women as it is to their mother. For example, Olie commented on how her step-mother no longer lives with her and her father:

“my step-mum used to live with me before, she used to live with us for I think two or three years probably, and then when she was pregnant she moved out. She went to live with her mum because I think she wanted somebody [...] she is very traditional [...] when you are pregnant you have to be fed really well, you have to have people to take care of you, so she moved in with her mum”.

Three mothers of grown up daughters discussed how they supported their daughters when they were pregnant. Hendrika made sure that she attended all the appointments and was in the delivery room with her daughter. Other mothers also discussed how they provided support to their daughters during their pregnancy and when they gave birth:

“when she [second daughter] found out she was pregnant [...], she was not well prepared, she had nothing, I went with her on her first antenatal consultation, I went with her to all her appointments” (Tania, OF),

“I sewed their baby clothes, their cot sheets, I sewed it all except for those that they bought at the shop, I did all of this for free, I have never asked my kids for any sort of payment or money, because love, there is no payment for love” (Tania, OF),

“I even took days off work when she was going to have the baby and I went with her, we went in the labour room, the two of us” (Alice, OF).

These three mothers are now helping with the childcare of their grandchildren.

### *Help with childcare*

Childcare support was also discussed by the younger cohort who happens to be parents to young children and who are already receiving this kind of support from their parents, mostly their mothers. These are mothers who can be argued to be from the ‘sandwich generation’ (Coleman and Ganong, 2000; Evans *et al.*, 2016). These mothers are involved in the care of their elderly parent, are employed, have adult children and some even have dependent children and grandchildren. Hendrika who is currently providing this kind of support to her eldest daughter also notes that this is the only support older parents should provide to their grown-up children, “I don’t think at that age, it’s possible to give financial help but you should be there to give them support with their kids only” (OF). Certain young people rely on their parents, especially their mother to help them with childcare:

“it is normal for me to ask her [mother] like if, I have extra classes, I have to look after my boy, I cannot do both at the same time, so my mum looks after my boy for a short time” (Josh, YM),

“like today I told her [mother] my schedule is a bit tight, so I won’t be able to take [son] and she said no problem she will take him home [...] at times when he is sick she [mother] would leave her house to come and see what is wrong and what she can do and how she can support us” (Sandra, YF).

Some older women also rely on either their mother or mother-in-law to help them with childcare:

“I never worried about looking after my kids during the holidays, they go to my mother, hah, she loves it, I would give them food, and, in the evening, I would go get them” (Alice, OF),

“the grandma [her mother-in-law] takes him [son] home and do the homework, by the time I reach home the homework is done, and I just have to give him a bath” (Maria, OF).

Furthermore, in the absence of a husband the mother gets involved in the child-rearing activities and the daughter has an obligation to support not only her child but the household in which she lives (Chamberlain, 2003) just as in the case of Suzy who lives with her children and mother. Suzy supports the household by taking care of the housing loans, paying for the utilities and buying the groceries. In turn she does not need to worry about childcare support, which is taken over by her mother. This can be linked to the feminist post-colonial analysis, which focuses on how certain practices are very gendered, where women support each other rather than having to rely on men.

It is commonly argued that the practices of child fostering, or child-shifting in the Caribbean were the result of male absence, serving as an explanation of the high incidence of single-mother-headed households and the subsequent heightened authority and power of women (Chamberlain, 2003: 65). This is not always the case in the Seychelles, for example, in the case of Hendrika, who was married but her mother was the one who took responsibility of the children and the house because of Hendrika’s work. However, there is still this reliance on a female family member for support.

However, there was a significant number of participants who said that adult children should *not* be depending on their parents at all. This was discussed by both young and older participants especially older men:

“I don’t think this is acceptable, I will help them [his children] for them to help themselves” (Jaques, OM),

“young adults should be independent, well they should be independent, parents should not have an obligation” (Sam, OM),

“grown up children should be mostly relying on themselves because as you grow up you have to take ownership of your life” (Stephy, YF).

In fact, some participants commented that adult children should be the ones helping their elderly parents in any way that they can:

“you are working, now you help your mother” (Matthew, OM),

“they have assisted you, you’ve grown up, you work, you have your own family, it should be vice versa, you should be providing for them” (Jaques, OM).

### Help is given because it is a question of faith

It is important to note that in the Seychelles some relatives help others because their faith requires this of them. The connections between religion and family life are receiving renewed attention from scholars (Eggeben and Dew, 2009: 108). Some participants noted that helping a relative doesn’t just have to do with the special relationship between a parent and their adult child. They believed that it is their faith which makes them take their responsibility to help certain family members:

“if it wasn’t for Him [God] would I have been able to reach the summit? No! When I reached the top of the summit I celebrated. The children have grown up, if I was

tempted by the devil I would have rejected my two children, yes, I would have done that, find another wife who might not want my two kids and rejected them” (Matthew, OM),

“because of my faith, I have been able to take the past, the pain, the misery, and everything, put that behind me and decide to do positive things, like taking care of my son, show him that I love him, and it is really the result of my faith. If I did not believe in anything, I don’t know, probably I would not be the same father I am today, the kind of father I am today, it is my faith, my faith has taught me that okay, forget the bad things, the past, throw it behind you, forgive those people who hurt you, love those who you should be loving” (Sam, OM [he used to be an atheist]).

It was only older participants who focussed on their faith. This wish on the older participants’ part to ‘clung tenaciously to the Catholic faith’ (Franda, 1982: 30) can be argued to be a result of post-colonisation. It must be noted that mass in the Catholic Church is still carried out predominantly in the French language. The Church is still very much involved with the state, for example, every year when the Court officially opens at the beginning of the year there is a mass which is attended by the judges and lawyers and other court employees. When a new government building is opened for the first time, it is blessed by the Catholic and Anglican priests. All this is from my observation as an insider. In his state of the Nation Address the President stated that:

“We ought to value the work of religious organisations and see it as something which complements the role and guidance of parents. Educational institutions should also join in and open up to create the space for the learning and appreciation of spirituality and morality. This creates a need for a collaborative effort based on trust” (President Danny Faure, 14 February 2017).

It is still compulsory for Catholic children who are yet to receive their first Holy Communion and their Confirmation to attend mass every Saturday or Sunday. Even when it was my own time to do my first Holy Communion I was forced to attend mass every Sunday and that was 30 years ago.

However, the younger generation did not believe that God or their faith has anything to do with whether they help their relatives or not. This does not suggest that the young people did not believe in God. In fact, only two young men considered themselves as atheists. All the others believe in God, but they do not believe that it is their faith that makes them take on their responsibility to help others. Some of them say that it is the way they have been socialised that influences whether they help others or not. For them taking on certain familial responsibilities, like helping others, is taught and learnt within the family itself:

“I don’t go to church often, I believe in God, I told my mum I do not have to go to church to show that I believe in God, I pray, but value wise, I think values are common sense, it is not something that can be forced on to you if you have not learned it, you won’t get it no matter how hard you pray. You won’t get a value, it is something you get while growing up” (Tessa),

“when I was a kid, through religion I learned a few things but not everything, inside the family, for example, if I need to take care of a family member, that is something I learned within the family, only things I took, not much, that Catholicism has taught me, about family life” (Daniel).

## **Family rituals**

There are rituals which can be argued to be distinctively Seychellois and some which we share with other cultures. Some of these rituals have become established family practices. Morgan's (2011) fifth feature of family practices suggests that family practices are not discrete but connect with and relate to values, sites and practices more broadly (Morgan, 2011). For example, they may be related to and/or understood as religious practices. One of these practices is the religious rituals which involve Christians generally. This is the Sabbath, the day that Christians attend mass and be part of religious congregations, which is either on Saturday or Sunday. Gillis asserts that 'religious congregations took similar responsibilities upon themselves, insisting on approving all marriages, interceding in domestic disputes, and supporting broken families' (1996: 39). Most of the participants identify themselves as Christians with the majority being Catholics. For a practicing Christian Seychellois, there are three practices that must take place and as often as possible. These are, going to mass on a Saturday/Sunday; praying; and tending to the graves of the departed. As Gillis points out 'the good family life could take place only in godly households' (1996: 29). Hendrika, Maria, Chantal, Olivia, Tania, Alice, Suzy, who are all older women attend mass every Sunday and Loraine (OF) who is Pentecostal attends her religious ceremony every Saturday. Olivia (OF) makes sure that "my kids are brought up in my faith, this is important to me". Attending mass is a family thing:

"my mum has always encouraged us to follow God's words, to go to mass, for us to do the things that we have been taught since we were small, so we always go according to those things, like praying, even if we do not pray together, we pray, we regularly go to mass when we can and our kids follow the same path" (Suzy, OF),



“my children are being brought up in this faith and I am a child who has been brought up with a lot of faith as well, so we still instil the same principles in them” (Brenda, YF).

Among the older male cohort Jaques, Christophe, Dominic, Pierre, Sam and Ian attend their individual religious congregations, which Pierre refers to as “Sundays it is like, you go to mass to charge your charger just like with your phone, for the following week”. As Franda argues Seychellois has been loyal to Catholicism, (1982: 31) which is a remnant of the French colony. The Roman Catholic Church was established in 1853 and remained dominant (Benedict and Benedict, 1982: 144). Benedict argues that considering the diversity of the slaves’ origins and the way that families were broken up by slavery, it is hardly surprising that African traditional religions did not survive (Benedict and Benedict, 1982: 144). Even if nowadays there are other religious groups, Roman Catholicism remains the dominant religion. According to the Population and Housing Census of 2010, 76 percent of the population identified themselves as Roman Catholics. The second one was Anglican (6.1 percent). So, the dominance of Roman Catholicism perseveres.

However, very few of the young people attend mass. This includes Molly, Teresa, and Stephy and Brenda whose mother made sure since they were small that they attend mass together as their mother stated authoritatively “if it is a Sunday and I have said we are going to church, we all go to church”, and this is still being practiced by the young women. Stephy noted that “because this is the religion we have all grown up with and become accustomed to”. The chain of the socialisation process remains unbreakable in those young women. However, some young participants have managed to break free from this ideological conditioning but not completely. They no longer practice their religion, but they still hold on to their faith:

“I don’t go to church often, I believe in God, like I told my mum I do not have to go to church to show that I believe in God” (Tessa, YF),

“God gave me the power to think for myself, to choose for myself, you saying that I’m going to hell for it, or that it’s wrong or try to send me to institutions that will reform me to turn me straight, is you removing that free will from me” (Hannah, YF).

Two young men identify themselves as atheists. Neil said that he was still searching for the truth, and Travis claimed that he is an atheist who has no faith even if he was brought up in the Catholic faith.

Being a Christian does not just involve attending mass regularly but also praying. Prayers are used for several purposes. For example, Hendrika (OF) stressed that praying has made it possible for her to face her husband’s affair, “and that was the time in my life when I became more religious, I started praying a lot”. Praying did not only help her to cope with the infidelity but also with her daughter’s self-harm, her older daughter’s miscarriage, dealing with the care of her elderly mother, and ultimately the death of her mother. According to her this was one of her purposes in life:

“I realised that the reason God has put me on the earth is to take care of my mother until she passed away [...] this is my life and I guess God has a plan for me but I don’t know, they say your life is mapped out so this was mapped out for me” (Hendrika, OF).

For Dominic and his family, praying together every day is a ritual that has become an established family practice:

“we pray together every day at home, we are given blessings, it gives you the strength to wake up in the morning, being a Catholic has helped me to see those things and this has brought me closer to the church”.

Praying is important to Olie (YF) as it is a way of feeling close to her deceased mother. Praying has helped her to deal with the grief of losing her mother and so she keeps on doing it even if it has been almost eight years since her mother passed away as “I feel like I need to talk to my mum, I will pray and I talk to my mum, every day through prayer, this is how I feel close to her”. Considering her mother is not with her in the physical form she prays to feel close to her and this ritual has become a practice for her.

Being a Christian also involves visiting and tending the graves of the departed. This is important to Olie:

“every week I will visit my mum’s grave in the cemetery and I sit down, and I pray with her because when I pray, I feel she is sitting next to me, so I pray a lot, I feel close to my mum in this way” (YF).

Olivia (OF) commented on how soon after her father’s death “every week we went to the cemetery”. Jaques (OM) also noted that “for example, now we have to do the grave of my mother, we would come together”, as does young Teresa who said that “so that there would always be somebody to come and take care of the tombstone and bring fresh flowers”. Brenda, (YF) whose partner died almost two years ago, mentioned how visiting his grave is important for her daughter to know about her father considering he passed away before she was born. She sighed that “she knows where the grave is and each time we pass by she asks me to bring small flowers to the grave, so we go”. This ritual has become for some family members a practice, like in the case of Hendrika and her daughter, “I go to the grave every now and then with [daughter] we go by, the two of us”.

There is a pattern amongst the older generation where it is mostly those who attend church who are the same ones involved in praying as well as visiting and tending the grave of the departed. This is illustrated in Table 5 (see appendix 2 page 297).

Another family ritual involves around the issue of death. In the Seychelles, each time there is a death there are funeral announcements about it on the radio, to let people know that this person has passed away. This announcement might take place over two or three days, at specific times (half past six in the morning, half past noon and half past six in the evening). The first announcement is to let people know that this person has passed away. Subsequent future announcements involve letting people know when the funeral would take place, at which funeral parlour the deceased can be viewed, at which church the funeral would be held and in which cemetery the departed would be buried (unless the deceased would be cremated but this does not happen often). People would be made aware where there would be buses stationed for those who wish to attend the funeral. The same song is used each time there is an announcement of a deceased person and this song is only identified as the obituary theme tune. It remains the same for as long as I remember. Now, the important thing here is the mentioning of the person's relatives, which involves mentioning all the surnames associated with the departed one. If one surname has been forgotten this might create conflict. Death can be considered as a huge thing in the Seychelles. It can bring family members together and it can then tear them apart afterwards.

The ritual of death was discussed mostly by the older generation and they have experienced the loss of close family members more than the younger generation. Table 6 illustrates this (see appendix 2 page 300).

As Table 6 illustrates all the older participants have been involved in one way or another in funeral preparations and have also experienced the death of loved ones. Only one

of the young participants have experienced death when her partner, the father of her children died tragically two years ago. Six of the younger participants have not experienced death and for some of them even if they have lost a family member they do not remember much about it (or they do not remember it at all like in the case of Tony and Evans) because they were very young when the death happened.

Preparing for the funeral of a deceased has been considered as a woman's responsibility in the Seychelles as illustrated by young Travis "this is typical here for women to oversee all the funeral arrangements". Preparing the body for the wake is a women's affair – men do not get involved in this. If they do, it is on rare occasions. Women are usually the ones who wash the body, dress it and adorn it with flowers. The funeral parlour workers only help if they are asked to. As discussed previously death tends to bring family members together:

"this is one time in Seychelles where you see everybody, whether you have not been friends for some time or you have not talked to someone for some time, when there's death everybody is friends, everybody chips in, everybody helps, everybody cries together, this is very typical" (Lorraine, OF),

"last year when my aunty died, [...] all of us came together and we did what we had to do, because we live in Bel Ombre, in town there are gravediggers but Bel Ombre no, you have to do it yourself, you find friends, and they help you, so each was given something to do, I was responsible for the declaration and buying of the coffin" (Jane, OF),

"we came together, we support each other, we helped as much as we can, we helped her [deceased relative] and made sure she had a proper burial even if she had absolutely no money, she left nothing behind, but we took care of her, we met

together and contributed, her brothers, her sisters and her cousins on her mother's side they helped as well" (Gemma, OF).

Gillis argues that 'death was reimagined in a holy theocentric way as the final rite of passage that frees believers from all earthly bonds, thus allowing them to return to the father in heaven' (1996: 30) and many Seychellois tend to share this belief. Many participants argued that death is now the one thing that is guaranteed to bring families together albeit for just a couple of days until the loved one has been put to rest. The symbolism of death which used to be seen as a way of saying goodbye is now a way of saying hello to a family member who has refused to keep in contact before the death of a mutual loved one. The older generation noted that in the past families came together for more happy occasions like weddings, baptisms and birthday celebrations but this is not the case as it used to be when they were younger. Some families still meet for such occasions, but the participants noted that it is not the same as before. According to them there is a shift where now families would only come together in 'bad times' such as sickness and death:

"when there is a death or an illness we get together, but apart from that, we all stay at our own home" (Chantal, OF),

"something bad has happened in the family, like let us say, somebody is dead you get to meet, because that is a time when family members are there to bring support, so it is an opportunity to meet" (John, OM),

"otherwise we don't get to see each other unless there is an illness or other bad things that will bring us together again" (Ian, OM).

The younger generation seemed to believe that 'bad times' is indeed the time that family do come together:

“that is something fascinating about my family, like every other time when there is nothing wrong we are fragmented, everybody living their own lives, we hardly see each other but if there is something big, they bond together like crazy” Hannah (YF).

Participants commented that celebrations, which basically are good times which should be shared in order to make memories for the new generation is not happening as often as it should. However, some participants still meet for happy occasions. As Jones and Hackett argue typical family events such as shared Christmases, family holidays, other milestones in family life appeared to cumulatively contribute to the ongoing and complex process of building family identity (2010: 62-63) and “in events we are always there to, like celebrate birthdays” (Meryl, YF).

These activities do maintain family relationships but because they happen sporadically, they are not necessarily family practices. For example, Olivia, her siblings, their partners and their children would meet once a year and that is for New Year’s Day:

“my sisters, my brothers, there is one who lives on Praslin, he will come down for the New year, we love to meet for the New Year. For Christmas, we stay with our own individual family, but for New year we meet with our mother. We go to mass in the morning and then we go to our mum’s house, we cook lunch and have lunch together, we drink, we get drunk, we dance, and have fun with our mum as our dad is not here, we wish that our dad was still here but we have fun, our mum is so happy and then we all go to our own home”.

These family practices and rituals reveal that there are still strong family links between family members, even if several participants think this is not the case. Even if people do not meet as often as they claim they did in the past, at the end of the day they still meet, albeit for certain occasions or in bad times. When there is a tragedy, family members know that

automatically they come together and support each other. Even if participants say that families tend to come together in bad times there are still instances that they come together in good times, for example like New Year's Day. Sunday remains traditionally a family day. Also, even if they come together during bad times, at least they do pull all their resources together and come together, even if they each go their separate ways after the event. The fact that they show up when one is sick, or one has died reveals that they still feel obligated towards members of their family. They support each other. They help each other.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on family practices. Family practices involve spending Sundays with family members, family visits which are made possible because of the size of the main island. Other family practices are seeing family members daily and regularly. Family practices also involve the provision of support to each other and the main type of support was between parents and children. Here it was seen that mostly daughters provide personal care for their parents, and mothers continued to be important sources of support for their daughters. All the participants agreed that when help is needed by a relative that person should receive help, and this is one of the most important family responsibilities. There were several types of help that some participants noted that parents could provide to their adult children. This included financial help, helping daughters during pregnancy and helping daughters with childcare. Some participants noted it is their faith which makes them help certain family members. The chapter then focused on family rituals. These rituals related to religious practices. For a practicing Christian Seychellois, there are three practices that must take place and as often as possible. These are going to mass on a Saturday/Sunday, praying and tending to the grave of the departed. Here it was seen how mostly the older participants



clung obstinately to their faith. This was however not the case for several of the young participants. Another family ritual involves around the issue of death which was discussed mostly by the older generation. When there is a tragedy, family members come together and support an elderly parent who is dying or support each other when there is a death.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Findings – Commitment and the care of the elderly**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses firstly on how commitment is developed and secondly how it is displayed by different genders and generations in the Seychelles. As Smart argues there may be reason to consider the work commitment does in the sociological understanding of contemporary family and relationships (2007: 67). Finch and Mason posit that commitments represent responsibilities accepted which have lasting consequences (1993: 94). Commitment is also considered to be a psychological attachment through which an individual intends to continue in a relationship indefinitely, which is integral to the success of any close relationship (Rusbult, 1980). As Johnson (1999) noted commitment emerges in the form of an individual feeling obligated. It is important to note that when I refer to commitment I mean the commitment people feel towards family members.

The first section will focus on the development of commitment and that it is developed through the idea of reciprocity. The concept of reciprocity is a key idea which is used in explaining the foundations of mutual aid in families (Finch and Mason, 1993: 34). Here the responses of the participants to a vignette will be discussed, which reveal that repaying favours done in the past is still a powerful idea at the normative level. The second section will then focus on the display of commitment. Here, I will argue that there is no greater commitment to elderly parents than to care for them when they can no longer do so themselves. When the elderly is taken care of by their children, this is a way that their children display their commitment to them. The elderly in the Seychelles context are those aged 65 and over and can comprise of those that need care from other family members. This

section will also examine the normative expectation that adult children should be the ones responsible for the care of their ageing parents. Here, the section will focus on the involvement of the older generation in the care of their elderly parents and how the obligation they feel towards their parents seems to be transferred to the younger generation. The section will also discuss the third trait of post-colonial Seychelles which is gender, because care of the elderly is gendered.

The subsequent section will discuss the involvement of the state in providing care for the elderly though this is mostly not accepted by many of the participants, especially the older women. The commitment that children feel towards the elderly is also displayed through intergenerational solidarity (Henriette, 2017). This section will discuss that young people are not far removed from any need to care for older relatives as some of the young participants have or are already involved in the care of older relatives. Some young participants were close to the elderly though some of them felt ambivalent about their involvement. Hence, the subsequent section will focus on the concept of ambivalence. Here, it will discuss that even if people have developed commitment and then displayed it to their relatives, all relationships have some ambivalence, and this can lead to conflict.

Hence, the last section will discuss how care of an elderly parent can create conflict between siblings. This will be illustrated through two case studies. One of the case studies is Tania and her case will reveal how the care of her mother has created conflict between her and her siblings. The other case study is that of Hendrika and her case will also show how the care of her elderly mother has created conflict between her and her siblings. However, it will be seen that in Tania's case, she is in conflict with her siblings because they are not willing to get involved at all in the care of their elderly mother, and their mother is also the one creating conflict between them. In Hendrika's case, it will be seen that her mother did

not create conflict between her and her siblings but there is some conflict because her siblings did not participate actively in the care of their elderly mother. This chapter will also discuss how there is a third ethic of care and that women in post-colonial Seychelles face a 'quadruple shift'. First, the chapter will discuss the development of commitment.

### **The development of commitment – being reciprocal**

Relatives are aware that when support is given at one point in time, later, there is the expectation to 'return in kind'. This is the theme of reciprocity. It can be argued that when relatives reciprocate they do so because there is an established moral code between the members of the family (*quid pro quo*). The idea that adult children owe their parents something in return can be viewed as a common sense moral belief – a belief that is entrenched in our moral framework, it is a norm 'that goes without saying' (Van den Hoven 2006: 44 in Stuijbergen and Van Delden, 2011: 64). I wish to argue that commitment develops out of reciprocity, in the sense that when a favour is returned in kind, this develops commitment between those involved. It has been argued by Benedict and Benedict (1982), that reciprocity is very cultural in the Seychelles, where favours are expected to be returned in kind. This is reflected through a saying 'lanmen drwat i lav lanmen gos' which is translated as 'right hand washes left hand' – essentially when right hand is washing left hand, it is also getting washed in the process – which is reciprocity. As Finch and Mason (1993) argue, the concept of commitment enables us to emphasize that reciprocity is not reckoned purely in material terms, but it also has moral dimensions:

“there is a sense of obligation. It's a moral duty, and we always feel like, if you do something for me, when you are down and out I would do the same for you. So, it's

mutual assistance basically. It is like the point of giving back. You give me something, I feel that it is ingrained in me to give something back” (Molly, YF),

The concept of reciprocity is a key idea which is used in explaining the foundations of mutual aid in families as it refers to the way in which people exchange goods and services as part of an on-going and two-way process (Finch and Mason, 1993: 34). I used a vignette (see Appendix 1 - Vignette 2) which describes the relationship between an ex-mother-in-law and her ex-daughter-in-law. All the participants said that the ex-daughter-in-law should reciprocate but there are some factors that must be taken into consideration:

Fabrice: It depends on the connection that they have, if they are still friends, I think she should help, she should be thankful for all the help the mother-in-law has given them, it would be, not an obligation, but a good action on her part to help the ex-mother-in-law back, it is the right thing to do, I suppose.

Farida: What do you mean it depends on the connection that they have?

Fabrice: Well it is her mother-in-law, her ex-mother-in-law, like sometimes there can be tension between mother-in-law, and it depends on, if they actually liked each other, like they don't have the family bond *per se* but if they have connected, like even though they are not blood related, if they have connected on a close family-like bond, then I don't see any problem why she wouldn't help her.

There is a clear consensus among both the males and the females and the older and younger cohort that there should be a level of reciprocity on the part of the ex-daughter-in-law. It appears that most of the participants feel that their history of mutual aid gives them compelling reasons to go on helping each other where they have developed commitments which provide the driving force for the relationship to continue as argued by Finch and

Mason (1993: 35). The participants outlined many reasons why they think the ex-daughter-in-law should reciprocate:

“morally I think she needs to help her even though it is only with her children that she gave her help and not with her directly” (Carlos, YM),

“you need to repay a good deed with a good deed” (Pierre, OM),

“for me it is a must to help her because if she was there to help the children, there is that, how do you call it, reciprocity towards that person” (Laurent, YM).

The younger women related their answers to their personal experience where they practiced being reciprocal (Olie) and their values with regards to being reciprocal (Tessa):

“my aunty, she helped my mum, because she used to come to my house every day, to clean the house and take care of my mum and now that my mum has passed, I am very grateful to her and I can’t forget her, and I would sometimes spend Saturdays with her” (Olie),

“because you do not forget people who have helped you, no matter what. If for example, just one day [partner] and I break up, I am the ex-daughter-in-law now, if his mum falls sick his mum is still and will always be [daughter’s] grandmother so if I can help in any way, I should, and I would” (Tessa).

The older women focused more on when people are faced with certain dilemmas, they would draw on a range of values about care and commitment to work out in practice what would be the ‘proper thing to do’ (Williams, 2004). They thought about the vignette being a situation that they can relate to considering some of them have or had mothers-in-law and they empathized with the ex-daughter-in-law:

“it depends on the relationship of the daughter-in-law with other members of that lady’s family but if I was that daughter-in law, I would help her in whatever ways I could” (Lorraine, OF),

“on my side, it depends on what kind of help she needs and I would help her, since she has taken care of my children, I would help her, and especially as she didn’t ask me for anything when she took care of my kids, so I would help her in any way that I can” (Gemma, OF),

“if it was me definitely, I would help her, even if she is no longer my mother-in-law” (Jane, OF).

It is interesting to note that most of the women who did not put themselves in the shoes of the ex-daughter-in-law do not have a mother-in-law. This includes Alice, Suzy, Olivia and Chantal. Essentially the participants’ answers to the vignette revealed there is still a powerful idea at the normative level that favours should be repaid – people should be reciprocal. When people are reciprocal commitment then develops between them.

### **The display of commitment – taking care of the elderly**

Finch argues that display is the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, convey to each other and to appropriate audiences that certain of their actions do establish ‘doing family things’ and thereby confirm that these relationships are ‘family relationships’ (2007: 67). One way of displaying this is the family practices of taking care of the elderly. This is usually done by adult children. The role of adult children in providing long-term support and care to their ageing parents has aroused much interest in social gerontology and family studies in the last quarter century (e.g., Brody and Brody, 1989; Logan and Spitze, 1995; Silverstein, 2006; Silverstein and Parrott, 2001). The first

discussion in this section is that it is children who should take care of their elderly parents and that this remains a norm in the Seychelles. This section also discusses that at times, the elderly can be placed in a home and hence cared for by the state, though this is mostly not accepted by most of the participants who took part in the research. The main argument here is that ultimately in the Seychelles, it is children who should provide care for their elderly parents – and this discourse remains dominant.

When family members show solidarity towards their elderly this a sign of their commitment to them and they display this commitment by caring for them and being there for them in their time of need. There is a growing population of elderly in the Seychelles and support for them would be needed at some point in time. Elder care entails a variety of supports and responsibilities, many of which can change in intensity and complexity over time (Bookman and Kimbrel, 2011: 120). In short, caring for the elderly can be demanding for those involved who usually are their adult children. In the Seychelles context, it is expected for adult children, and *preferably*, daughters to take care of their elderly parents. Cheal asserts that ‘the belief that women are uniquely suited for domestic caregiving supports a sexual division of occupations in which women do jobs that resemble their roles as wives and mothers’ ending in careers that tend to involve children, the sick and the elderly (2008: 5). It must be noted that there are few homes for the elderly in the Seychelles, which usually cater for those who do not have many relatives or those who are too sick to be cared for by their relatives. In fact, the government has a carer system in place whereby it provides carers (in some instances for free depending on the salary of the elderly parent’s child/children) during the day for the elderly, so that their adult children can work during the day and take over their care after their working hours. This section will be focussing on the activity of ‘doing care’ – which has become established family practices in many families.



### Children should be the ones caring for the elderly

There is a consensus among the older females (nine out of ten) that children should be the ones caring for their elderly parents. Many people find themselves fulfilling the role of carer for their ageing parents (Hodges and Copello, 2015). Many of the older female participants relate to their own personal experiences of looking after their elderly parent and there is a clear indication that they have developed commitment to that parent as the parent has done certain things for them which they are immensely grateful for. So, caring for the parent can be reciprocal:

“I am happy to do it, but at times I am a bit tired but I do it, and I do it with love, because I am aware what she has done for me, like now I have my own house, I have land, it is her who has given me a plot of land to build on and this is one way of thanking her, I won’t tell her that but I am aware of it, and I find ways of thanking her” (Chantal, OF).

Caring for an elderly parent can also be an obligation:

“I would never do something like that [placing her mum in a home], social services have suggested a couple of times, no, even if she has her faults, she is my mother, I would never be able to live with myself if I am living in a house where there is space and my mother is in a home, where she is being taken care of by strangers, when my mother, she has her children, she has seven of us girls, who are capable of taking care of her, if we unite together, give help to our mother” (Tania, OF).

These participants are not only suggesting that children should be the ones taking care of their parents, but they have also been or are the ones responsible for the care of their parents. This is illustrated in Table 7 (see appendix 2 page 304).

As illustrated in Table 7 many of the older participants, especially the older women have taken care of or are caring for an elderly parent. So, these adults have an obligation towards their parents and are committed to them. They have done this or are doing this by providing care for them. It has been argued that there is some power dynamics where there is the promise of a bequest which incentivises adult children to serve their ageing parents (Bernheim, Shleifer and Summers, 1985), which essentially is the promise of inheritance where parents use it as a form of leverage to gain support from the child. I am discussing this here because in the Seychelles context, this is not necessarily the case as the law makes provision for all children regardless whether they have helped their elderly parents or not, to receive an equal share of their parents' inheritance. This makes it easy for many adult children not to get involved in the care of their elderly parent/s. This is important to discuss here because as the data reveals most of the older participants are or have been involved in the care of their elderly parent/s and they have been doing it, not because of the prospect of inheritance, of getting something in return, but because of a strong sense of obligation towards their parents. For example, when Hendrika's mother passed away last year all her children received an equal share of their mother's inheritance even though Hendrika was the only one who was responsible for her care.

It is also important to note that these participants agreed to take part in the research about family responsibilities and obligations in the Seychelles because they themselves have a strong sense of obligation. This is a reason why I did not have any participants who were not actively taking care of their parents. They simply did not choose to take part in the study. As Ribbens McCarthy *et al.*, noted 'we simply do not get to hear their stories' (2003: 138) – they would be unable to present a moral tale about their lack of obligation.

Ribbens McCarthy *et al.*, have identified two ethics of care operating people's tales: a dominant one for dependent children, and a less common one for self (2003: 139). I identified a third ethic of care which is also dominant one, and that is for dependent elderly parents. In fact, for some older participants this third ethic of care has been the dominant one over the care of their dependent children. For example, Hendrika, (OF) who travelled a lot when her children were young would leave them in the care of her mother:

"I had [first daughter] like when I was 25 and I was still young and immature at that age, and so my mother sort of took over the care of [first daughter] and I was working almost all of the time, [...] travelling all the time, [...] he [husband] was busy, has just started to be part of management at his job and he was busy and we didn't really have time for the home, so my mother really took over the running of our house, and then came [second daughter] so [second daughter] sort of became my mother's little baby at that time, and so she took over and she was managing the house, cleaning the house, as I would be travelling and my husband would be travelling, so she was always there for my two daughters, that's why my kids grew very close to my mother and she stayed with us until she passed away",

"I would be too busy to take the kids to the doctor, I have a meeting, I have this, I have that, so my mother takes them, then he [husband] would drop my mother and then pick her up".

However, when her elderly mother became dependent, she left her work, (which she has been doing for more than 25 years) and started a small business, which made her time management easier so she can be there to provide care to her elderly mother (even if during the day her mother had a carer, she was so committed to her mother, she made sure that she was within reach if anything happens):

“I was working and there was nobody to take care of her and all that [...] it was tough for me, it was tough, it was only me and [second daughter] and we had to give her a bath the two of us [...] you have to do these things, feeding her [...]”.

Basically, Hendrika was willing to give up her work to be available to provide care for her elderly mother. That does not mean that she cares less for her children, but it does show that the obligation to care for the elderly is as dominant as it is to care for dependent children.

It seems that this strong sense of obligation is being transferred to the younger generation especially the young women. Table 8 (see appendix 2 page 306) illustrates the involvement of the parents of the younger generation in the care of their grandparents as well as whether the young people have suggested if they would be involved in the future care of their parents when their parents become dependent.

As Table 8 illustrates, most of the younger women plan to take care of their parents and currently their parents are in some way involved in the care of their grandparents. However, it is mostly women (the young generation's mother/aunt) who have been or are actively involved in the care of their grandparents. This shows that there is this strong third ethic of care and that care remains gendered.

Most of the younger females agreed that it is children who should look after their elderly parents. The younger women who have said that they will take care of their parent/s have stated that this will happen – when the time comes – they will do it. Meryl who happens to be a mother herself expects her daughter to take care of her when she becomes an elderly person and she is socialising her daughter, inculcating this value of taking care of the elderly in the child:

“to make sure my daughter, even if I have future children, just to make sure that I give them the values so that when I am old they will be the ones taking care of me”.

The younger men felt differently about the care of the elderly. In fact, even if more than half of them agreed that children should be the ones taking care of their elderly parents only three of them (Travis, Josh and Tony) hinted that they will take care of their elderly parent. They noted that it was something uncomfortable because they are men. Nevertheless, they claimed that this will not prevent them from taking care of their parent. This is the case for the three young men who are either an only child (Josh, Tony) or the only son who happens to live with the mother (Travis):

“If tomorrow she [his mother] finds herself alone in the house, there’s no one to accompany her and she cannot do anything, so definitely, I should be the one taking care of her [...] I might not go to the extent of bathing her, but then you never know, if I don’t have a choice, I don’t have a choice, but she is my mother, I have to take care of her, I won’t give her to someone else to take care of, I won’t give her to the state and have her put in an elderly home, no” (Travis, YM) [shaking his head vigorously to show that he was against the notion of institutionalising his mother and her future care was something that he was passionate about].

Josh who is an only child noted that “in my family the culture is to take care of our elderly”. He said that he plans to take care of his mother as “it is in the equation, you start planning ahead financially, the expenses that come with it [...]”. He is essentially an adult son with no siblings who would ultimately find himself ‘caring by default’ (Arber and Ginn, 1999: 322; Campbell and Martin-Matthews, 2000: 109 cited in Milligan, 2009: 31). Josh laughed that he finds it awkward to have to change his mother’s diapers if it comes to that as:

“I am not going to look at my mother’s privates, I am a boy, it is going to be awkward, I do not know if I would be able to do it, maybe I would be able to do it or I’ll get somebody to do it for me, we have carers here, the government provides carers for the elderly”.

To perceive how the participants acknowledged that there is a notion of familial responsibility I used a vignette (see Appendix 1 - Vignette 1) describing a son facing the dilemma of what to do about his parents who live on another island after they have both been injured in a car accident. There was no consensus over what should happen as the participants had a variety of views on what the son should/shouldn’t do. The most common response among the older generation was that the son should hire someone to take care of his parents. This makes me wonder about the effect of the experience of taking care of an elderly or sick relative which the older generation had, at some point of their lives, gone through, and the younger generation (the majority of them) hasn’t gone through yet. In fact, three of the older males found this question to be a real dilemma for them. They were not sure what the son should do. Ian who used to take care of his mother until she passed away said that someone should stay as a carer with his/her parents as:

“you’re going to destroy the relationship you have with your mum and dad, you will destroy your relationship with your wife and kids, so all in all, everyone would be a loser”.

Ian was clearly speaking from experience because there was some tension between his mother and his wife when he and his wife were taking care of his mother who passed away two years ago:

“it was very challenging because I had to spend a lot of time to maintain the relationship between my mum and my wife, not easy, there was some tension”.

Some of the older participants suggested that the son should pay for someone to take care of his parents *and* visit them as often as he can, and some older women said that the son can go over to visit but he cannot leave his wife, especially as she recently had a baby.

It was mostly the young men who said that the parents should move down to Mahé and stay with their son so that he can provide help to them, as well as to his young family and go to work. Here, this might relate to the fact that the younger male generation is unaware of the responsibilities involved in taking care of elderly/sick people. Half of the young women noted that the son should move to Praslin with his young family, “which will be a perfect opportunity for the grandparents to meet the new born” (Sandra, YF).

The least common response to the vignette was for the son to move to Praslin to be with his parents, leaving his young family behind as “now his parents need him more, so in this case he should go and help his parents” (Tania, OF). In general, all the participants agreed that the son should do something, but this can be achieved in different ways. So, the participants’ responses to this vignette clearly show that there is the agreed norm that adult children should do something to support their parents though there is less broad agreement as to exactly what children should do as identified by Finch and Mason (1990: 156). However, there is a clear contradiction in the participants’ answers in the sense that most of them argued that children should be the ones who take care of the elderly, but when faced with this vignette their responses differ as most of them responded that the son should hire someone to take care of his parents. That does not mean that the participants are suggesting that this is what they would do if they were in the son’s situation but as most of them noted that this situation was a temporary one, then it was acceptable for the son to hire someone.

Even though it has been argued that adult children owe something to their elderly parents because their parents have done much for them (Dykstra and Fokkema, 2011),

essentially reciprocity, this is not the only case. It is important to note that even if there is the notion of being reciprocal towards their elderly parents, most of the older participants are taking care, have taken care or plan to take care of their elderly parent/s because of a strong sense of obligation rather than reciprocity. For example, Olivia noted that she does not rely on her mother to help her with anything – and yet she will take care of her mother when her mother becomes dependent. She has such a strong sense of obligation that she claimed that she would even leave her husband – essentially the marital home – to go live with her mother and take care of her:

“if my mum ever falls ill, I would even leave my husband and go live with her to take care of her, I do not want a carer to take care of my mum, no, no, better your kids, rather than a stranger, the other person would not take care of your elderly parent like you would” (OF).

Another example is Lorraine, who does not believe in relying on her mother or cause her any worry, and yet she is extremely obligated towards her mother, to the extent that she is currently adding an extension to her house for her mother when she needs the care. Another example is Jane. Jane felt that her mother did not treat her fairly compared to the way she treated her older sister. She was annoyed that she was the one responsible for her mother’s personal hygiene and her sister was the one responsible of her mother’s finances:

“there were two of us, my sister and me, and every day I would tell my mother, sorry to say this, I took care of the [poo] and my sister took care of the money because all of the financial transaction, my sister was the one responsible for that, but I was the one who was taking care of her” (OF).



Regardless of all this Jane felt obligated towards her mother and she was so committed to her that she even left her work to take care of her on a full-time basis because she did not trust anyone to provide the care that she felt her mother needed:

“I left work and I went to work with her and took care of her, I did everything for her [...] our parents are ours, so we should take care of them”.

She left her work to become her mother’s full-time carer until her mother passed away. To consolidate the income (which was very low compared to the salary she was earning when she was working in her previous work) she received as her mother’s carer, her mother moved in with her and she rented her mother’s house to tenants. She even converted a room which she used to use as a laundry room into a bedroom (using her own finances), with all the facilities that an elderly person would need to ensure that her mother was comfortable.

It has been argued that the bond between parent and child in 1960s Seychelles was stronger than those between spouses (Benedict and Benedict, 1982: 128) and this seems to be the case for some of the participants. Examples here include: Olivia who is willing to leave her husband to take care of her mother; Maria’s mother who left her husband to take care of her mother (even if her mother did not like her husband); Vivienne who relies on her mother more than on her spouse; and Gemma who relies on the advice of her mother. These women are also adamant that it is preferably women who should take care of the elderly.

### The gendered division of care

Gender remains the most important dimension in personal care (Finch, 1989: 28). The care of the highly dependent person by ‘the family’ in most cases, means care by one relative, usually a female relative (Nissel and Bonnerjea, 1982; Parker, 1985). The

participants claimed that this remains the case in the Seychelles as the female relative is seen as the ideal one to take up this duty:

“you [daughter] see how I am taking care of my mother, if one day you hear your mother is sick even if you are 500 leagues behind the horizon, come down and take care of your mother, because someone else would not do the same, like if someone has a carer, that carer would never do the same as you the child would do” (Jane, OF),

“it is uncommon for men, I know of only one in my district, in my community I know only one man, but most of them are women who would [take care of the elderly], daughters mainly” (Maria, OF),

“NO! I am putting this [to take care of her] on my daughter [...] we expect our daughters, sometimes when we are sitting as a family and I am talking to the kids [...] when I was going to have my first child I was always praying to have a little girl [...] when I was going to get [firstborn son] I always wanted a girl, I always wanted my first born to be a girl” (Jane, OF).

It must be noted that in the Seychelles it is not the norm for sons to provide care for their elderly mother as ‘daughters help and care for their mothers in old age far more often than sons do’ (Benedict and Benedict, 1982: 260):

“we will only be beaten by our cultural thinking, where you see most nurses are women, and there are not a lot of male nurses and when you think about carers, it is in our culture that women can take care better than men, and a male carer to take care of a woman, to bathe her, and other things it is different, this is something we

ourselves need to build within us [...] So it is our culture which makes it difficult to accept this” (Pierre, OM).

This suggests that cultural norms for gendered roles have not caught up with structural changes, reflecting a phenomenon that Ogburn (1950) termed ‘cultural lag’ to denote how cultural ideologies formed under earlier conditions may continue to influence people’s behaviour under changed conditions (Bengston *et al.*, 2002: 569). Furthermore, when mothers do live with their sons these men often exercise the responsibility they felt towards that elderly parent through their wives (Finch, 1989: 40). For example, both Dean and Ian provide care and support to their elderly mother through their wives’ labour rather than directly their own:

“my wife will do her bit because she believes that ladies should help each other”  
(Dean, OM),

“[...] especially in my case where some of the support was not directly from me, it came from my wife, my wife is not really blood related to her, so it is a bit of a challenge [...]” (Ian, OM).

Gender specific rules operate more clearly when an elderly woman needs care (Finch and Mason, 1990: 167). For example, Alice and her sisters were more involved in the care of their parents and their brothers were not necessarily involved – they were more involved in transportation duties. Hendrika also was involved in the care of her mother and only received help from her adult daughter. Gendered obligations seem to be clear in the Seychelles’ cultural context where most cases of assistance are from daughters to mothers though there are cases of sons being active in the care of their elderly parent. For example, Christophe was active with his brothers as well as his sister in the care of his mother who was suffering from terminal cancer. Ian helped his wife to take care of his mother. Jaques was the one

responsible for taking his mother for kidney dialysis three times a week. Cyril takes turn with his brother to stay in hospital each time their mother is hospitalised. So, this introduces further complexities into our understanding of the gendered nature of obligations especially if we have to distinguish between public normative expectations and what is negotiated in practice (Finch and Mason, 1990: 168). Again, this is not just a question of equality but equity – it is fairer on the elderly mother, for example to receive care from her daughter out of respect for her decency. Having a son taking care of her is seen as indecent considering her personal care like having a bath. It is possible for adults to require ‘fair’ treatment with respect to their own needs, as individuals (Ribbens McCarthy *et al.*, 2003: 114).

This is true for the sons who were involved in the care of their mother. Christophe, Jaques, Cyril and his brother were involved in the care of their sick mother but they all noted that they were not involved in the personal care of their mother, as this was done by female family members. It is also important to note that Christophe’s only sister, as well as the sisters of Cyril, Dean and Ian do not live in the Seychelles. So, it can be argued that if these sisters were physically present in the Seychelles these older men might not have been too actively involved in the care of their elderly parent. In fact, Cyril noted that at times one of his sisters (the sisters would take turns) would come down to Seychelles when their mother is very poorly to take over her care. Again, gender comes into question as certain responsibilities are seen as those that only the women should take up like caring for the sick:

“it’s not set in stone but usually it’s on gender. I find that it is women who always have to take care of the sick. Or it could be by order of birth but let us say there is a man, a male child first then it should be his wife who should take care of the ailing person, it depends on the structure of the family and the dynamics but for the most

part, it is usually women who are taking care of the elderly and the sick” (Molly, YF).

There is still this strong patriarchal notion that caring for an ailing person is the duty of a female relative regardless of the gender of the one receiving the care. In the cases of daughters, in general they are expected to provide personal care to the sick and the elderly. Sons are mostly responsible for their parents’ finances, for example Hendrika’s brother was responsible for their mother’s finances even if their mother lived with Hendrika. There is also this issue around the birth order of the children. The order of birth suggests that there is a preference for younger daughters who are more involved in the care of sick or elderly parents for certain reasons. As Scarr argues ‘a woman could usually count on having one child left to care for her’ (2000: 29). One reason is that usually they are the ones ‘left behind’ like in the case of Matthew’s youngest sister who still stays at the family home and takes care of the mother; Jane’s cousin, who is the youngest daughter and is still living in the family home and is responsible for the care of the ageing mother. The sibling dynamic here is that youngest daughter tends to assume the responsibility for the care of an elderly parent, for example Chantal, Hendrika and Tania are all youngest daughters. Daughters seem to know that there is this cultural expectation of them to take care of their parents when their parents become dependent. Being a male sibling can be used as a good excuse for not getting involved in the care of the elderly parents, especially if the elderly parent is a mother:

“us Seychellois we always have this tendency that when a mother is old, to take care of her, to bathe her, this is more sensible for a daughter than for a son, this is my opinion, I don’t see my brother bathing my mum” (Tania, OF),

“because there is only my brother and I, and my sister is not here so I am the only female person who would take care of her [...] it’s always been this way, I mean the

men do take care of their parents but it is mostly the women who do that, I mean I do not expect my brother to bathe my mum” (Lorraine, OF).

Most of the older participants, especially the older women were not keen on having a male carer taking care of an elderly woman. Jane is one of those who refuses categorically for a man to work as a carer of an elderly woman, “I do not think that a woman should get a male carer, no, a man should work with a man”. Half of the older women commented that men can become carers but *only* to other men. They were adamant that a male carer cannot and should not be taking care of an elderly or sick woman:

“to take care of men only, not for a male carer to take care of a female, as I do not think that they would be able to take care of an elderly woman” (Hendrika, OF),

“most carers are women but men can also be carers, but carers of men, not women because they won’t find themselves at ease to bathe a woman, things like that, with a man they will be more at ease [...] girls are more responsible than boys, there are responsible boys, but there are more girls” (Olivia, OF).

Even some of the older men shared the views of the older women, that a man should not be caring for a woman:

“any work that a woman does a man can do, maybe there are men who need male carers, but I think that male carers should take care of only elderly men” (Dominic, OM),

“it depends on what kind of elderly person, if it is a woman or a man, like if it is a man, a male carer can take care of an elderly man, but a man to take care of an elderly woman, that is delicate, because to bathe her, like in my case, for me to bathe my

mother, I do not feel comfortable to bathe my mother, I would bathe my father, my mother, no, [shaking his head] it is delicate” (Matthew, OM).

The younger generation was more open-minded with the issue of having male carers. Almost all the younger participants, especially the women, said that men can also take care of the elderly:

“you have male nurses so why can’t you have male carers [...] there are some very caring men and some of them might even do a better job than some women, not all women, but some women, some women are just lazy, some men I think they can be really good carers, they can clean, they can cook, they can wash” (Tessa, YF),

“my father took care of my grandmother when she was sick, my aunt refused categorically to change my grandmother’s diaper and my dad stepped up, he is the youngest of the four, my dad stepped up, he bathed her, he changed her diaper, he got her into bed and he fed her” (Molly, YF).

When the elderly is provided with a carer, this is one way that the state gets involved in their care.

#### When the state gets involved in the care of the elderly

The state can get involved in the care of the elderly in two ways. One is by providing carers who would take care of the elderly person in the absence of the family member they are dependent on. The second one is by providing homes for the elderly. It has been discussed in Chapter Five that this is one of the duties that the state should not be involved in. However, it comes a time when family members do not have a choice but needs the involvement of the state so that their dependent elderly can receive the help they need.

Penrod *et al.* 1998 noted that moving into a residential care home was often seen as a last resort (cited in Katz *et al.* 2013: 211). None of the older women believed that the elderly should be institutionalised in a home for the elderly and the one older woman who did mention this noted that it should be done only in extreme cases, which she identified as when the person has no relatives to care for him/ her or is childless (though she reiterated that she was personally against placing the elderly into residential care homes). Most of the younger women were against the idea of institutionalizing an elderly parent, “they were there for you from the beginning and you should be there for them until the end” (Molly). In fact, most of the younger women noted that they have the intention of taking care of their parents and that it is their moral duty to do so, “I am very traditional about that, [...] I already know I will take care of my dad” (Hannah, YF) and:

“I’ve already told my husband, I would take my mother in when she can no longer take care of herself [...] because those people, they have worked hard for us, so basically, we are supposed to be there for them, it is something that should be within us, that now it is my turn to take care of that person who has taken care of me all this time” (Sandra, YF).

These young women can be said to be embedded in relationships that are important to them (Williams, 2004; Smart, 2007). On the contrary, some of the younger men were in support of placing an elderly in a home. For example, Steve used the circumstance of his grandmother as an example. His grandmother who suffers from dementia is currently living in a home:

“not that the elderly is a burden, it is just that it takes a lot of time and I guess it just prevents you from moving forward as much as possible in life when you have to stay at home to take care [...] so the best place I guess is in a nice home with qualified



people taking care of the elderly, where they can be with other people the same age and they can either talk about the past or just hang out with people their age, I guess that is what they would want”.

In contrast to the older women who firmly stated that it should entirely be the family/children who should take care of the elderly, some of the older males believed that institutions beyond the family and the government also has a role to play:

“like there are those elderly citizen clubs, which I think is a fantastic idea, and there should be more NGOs, involved with giving help to the elderly, like organising activities for them, school children visiting them, getting them out of their homes to keep their brains active” Christophe (OM),

“the government should also be supportive, should understand that there is a need, and whenever there is a genuine need it must be there to support” Ian (OM).

Teresa was one of the few young women who noted that even if “first and foremost it should be the kids” the government should also play a role as well so that “there could be better nursing homes” and she puts it down to experience. Teresa was very active in the care of her elderly grandmother and she saw how this took its toll on both her and her mother:

“I saw what it was like to take care of my grandma and it was hard, it was, it takes away any sense of life that you have for yourself, so it would be just the proper care, the proper facilities for taking care of the elderly and I think the government should step up and do what needs to be done”.

However, the majority of the participants argued that the family should be the first line of support and other agencies and the government should be there only to complement what the family is doing because:

“the elderly can be used for a lot of things, talk to children, spend time with them telling them things, and I think, this is my opinion, that the elderly should spend their last days with their family” (Pierre, OM).

According to Pierre, family members should show solidarity towards the elderly.

### Intergenerational solidarity

Contrary to Guberman’s (2003) findings which note that the young are typically far removed from any need to care for older relatives the findings revealed that this wasn’t necessarily the case. Some of the young participants have been or are already involved in the care of older relatives. Furthermore, it has been argued that intergenerational bonds have weakened because of increasing individualisation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) and diversity in family forms (Wirth in Silverstein *et al.*, 2012). These arguments have not been reflected in the data. There are young adults who are or have been involved in the care of their grandparents because of their shared history. The final feature of family practices is their constitution as a major link between history and biography and family practices are also rooted and created in an individual’s life history and experiences (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2011).

Young people who have been or are currently involved in the care of their grandparent includes Meryl, Teresa, Stephy and Brenda. They all have different relationships with their grandmothers. Intergenerational family relations have been explained using conceptual frameworks of solidarity, conflict and ambivalence (Bengston,

2001; Connidis and McMullin, 2002). For example, Brenda and Stephy's relationship with their grandmother is one based on conflict. Teresa's relationship with her grandmother was ambivalent. Meryl's relationship with her grandmother is one that is based on solidarity. Regardless of this these young people have one thing in common and that is at one point in their life their grandmother was the one who provided care for them. The way that care was provided had an impact on their future relationships in some ways. For example, Brenda and Stephy were abused physically by their grandmother when they were children. She used to flog them a lot as punishment. They do not repay in kind, but they are not keen on taking care of their grandmother, and more so because their grandmother is not just horrible to them but to their mother as well. Both Brenda and Stephy commented that when they provide care to their grandmother, they are not doing it for her, but for their mother so she can get some respite:

“as her kids, we are the ones who are at home she [mother] is not here so we understand that at times she also needs to have time for herself, so we do it [take care of grandmother] so that she can have a little time for herself” (Stephy, YF),

“my grandma is here but you know, we do not connect, she is here in person, but we do not connect because there are, I don't even know, I don't have a good relationship with her” (Brenda, YF).

Whilst Brenda and Stephy are not close to their grandmother, Meryl is very close to her grandmother, so it is important to note that when she helps her grandmother she is doing it as a support to *her* grandmother, the woman who raised her rather than helping her mother indirectly. Whatever she does for her grandmother she is doing it for her grandmother:

“because she has this special spot in my heart, I can tell that I am the favourite so it's nice to go visit some Sundays, she tends to spoil me a little bit, we just have this very

deep affectionate feeling towards one another, and I can say it is even more than with my own mum [...] because I am so in love with her, if she wants me to drop her at the bus terminal it's ok [...]" (Meryl, YF) [Something she would not do for other people].

So here it can be argued that Meryl is providing support directly to her grandmother, out of love for and duty towards her grandmother, whereas Brenda and Stephy provide support to their grandmother out of love for and duty towards their mother, indirectly supporting their mother. Brenda and Stephy feel a moral duty towards their mother and they display the commitment they feel towards her by helping to provide care for a grandmother they do not particularly like, whereas Meryl feels obligated towards her grandmother. She is committed to her grandmother. Brenda and Stephy are not. So, providing care for an elderly does not always mean that someone is directly committed to the elderly person.

It must be noted that the young people who did mention their grandparents are those whose grandparent has been in their life since they were children. This includes Brenda, Stephy, Meryl, Teresa, Olie, Sandra, Fabrice, Tony, Evans and Laurent. However, some of them are fond of their grandparent, and this grandparent has always treated them with kindness when they were children. This includes Meryl, Olie, Sandra, Fabrice, Tony and Laurent. Except for Laurent the grandparents of these young people are still alive and are visited as often as possible. So, some young people have and are taking care or are involved in the care of their grandparents, who took care of them at one point in their life, which is a sign of intergenerational solidarity though some of them felt ambivalent about it.

### Ambivalence

When her grandmother was alive, Teresa was close to her. However, Teresa was ambivalent about having to care for her grandmother, even though she was fond of her grandmother. When she provided support to her grandmother she did so both as a support to her mother *and* her grandmother. The ambivalence towards the care of her grandmother was created because of her mother's siblings' lack of involvement in the care of her grandmother. Even though she was frustrated about being the one responsible for the care of her grandmother, for example, when her mother was busy at work, she was glad that at the end of the day she was there to provide that support to her grandmother:

“I’m glad I was the one, I was one of them to help her [grandmother] and I hope that wherever she is, she is grateful, she appreciates it” (Teresa, YF).

Her frustration originates from her mother's siblings' lack of solidarity. She felt that her uncles and aunts should have been more involved in the care of their mother and she was annoyed about their lack of support as when her mother was not able to provide care for her grandmother, she was the one who ended up doing it:

“when we were taking care of gran, which was draining, it was exhausting, I was so mad. I was so angry, and I cried almost every day, because this was not my job, this was not my job! This is mum's job, with her siblings around, she has seven other siblings, why am I the one, being the one, to be helping her out?” (Teresa, YF).

Additionally, her mother had to give up certain things in her life to be able to take care of her grandmother, like leaving her work. Caring for her grandmother was extremely demanding on both her and her mother, where they would at times cry with each other from sheer exhaustion. Her mother, however refused to even think about putting her grandmother in a home. As Finch argues a consistent feature of unpaid caring is that once a particular

relative has taken on the responsibility for the care of an elderly person they get rather unlimited support (at times none) if any, from other relatives (1989: 27):

“it ended up with mum and myself doing it, we ended up doing everything, mum would wake up in the morning and she had to give gran her bath, her breakfast and change her nappies herself, do everything, then I will come home and would do what I can. I kept asking where are your brothers and sisters, where are your siblings? Why are we the only ones doing it, why, why, why, why, and she would always turn to me and said, it is her mother, she is the one who put her here with us in the house, I guess I know this, but she is also the mother of other people, I think it was just sad that it came to her having the last heart attack for them to go, oh ok we will come and see our mother, stupid people” (Teresa, YF).

There is this issue where the carer’s independent life is suspended for the duration of the caring relationship, which may last many years (Finch, 1989: 30) as in the case of Tania. Tania notes that her mother, who was a single mother, took care and provided for them (her and her siblings), when they were growing up and she doesn’t believe that her mother should be cared for by strangers. Tania is ambivalent towards the care of her mother. She feels that she must take care of her, even if they do not get on at all and her mother is the one creating division between her and her siblings. Yet, she cannot bring herself to institutionalise her mother. This can demand a very high level of commitment, in which caring for a relative completely dominates the carer’s own life (Finch, 1989: 27) as argued by Lewis and Meredith, (1988) ‘the majority of respondents led remarkably restrictive lives’. This is the case for Tania. When she applies for leave at work she only does it to take care of her mother so that her mother’s carer can take her own leave. She adds on that she cannot go on holidays abroad, go on weekend breaks on the other islands and hasn’t had a proper holiday in years.

Essentially, Tania has never received any respite as the carer stays with the mother during the day when Tania is at work and Tania takes over her mother's care when she comes home from work and during the weekends. However, Tania is committed to taking care of her elderly mother as she has a strong sense of obligation towards her mother. So even if people have developed commitment and then displayed it to their relatives, all relationships have a bit of ambivalence and this can lead to conflict.

#### When care creates conflict

I have discussed in the previous section how commitment is displayed by family members through the support the generations provide to each other, especially through the care of the elderly. However, ambivalence is created where the care of the elderly is concerned and at times one of the most challenging aspects of providing care for the elderly is that it creates tension between family members. Care for the elderly entails emotional, physical and at times financial demands, which in most cases bring conflict between those who are and those who should be responsible for providing such care (as some choose not to get involved). As the elderly is usually a parent with more than one child, the conflict concerning their care usually happens between her children, the siblings. Goetting (1986) argues that the second of three stages through which sibling relationships progress which takes place in early and middle adulthood, siblings continue to provide each other with companionship and emotional support, to cooperate in the care of their elderly parents and other relatives, (Rittenour, Myers and Brann, 2007: 171). This is not necessarily the case for most of the elderly female participants as for some of them their siblings chose not to get involved in the care of their elderly parents. Consequentially this led to conflicts. At times,

it is the parent herself (usually mother) who is being taken care of, who creates tension between her (or his) children. One example is Tania's mother:

“we see our mother as a burden and our mother is not, my mother is not the glue that glues us together, she is rather someone who creates division between us, she talks to one, then she talks to another one, she will say nasty thing to one and then to the other, so this creates this friction, this division, [...] she is not a quiet person, she is not passive, she is someone who is still domineering, she wants to be the one in control, she insults, she doesn't make things easy, she doesn't make it easy for those kids [Tania's children] because my mother is not someone who is appreciative, [...] you do not have a life, she is tiring, she will fight with them, she creates a lot of problems that make my life very difficult” (Tania OF).

Tania was very emotional and close to tears, when she spoke about the way she feels being the sole provider of care for a mother, who she identified as ‘unappreciative’, but she was also defensive towards her mother as she also said that her mother deserves better. This is ambivalence as her obligation as a daughter seems to be very strong even if the mother is not grateful nor loving towards her:

“I feel very sad, when I look at the way we behave towards our mother, we have always been in a single parent family and our mother worked hard for us, [...] she lives with me, and now I don't see myself as having a life, I don't have a life because my mother is very demanding, she is here, she doesn't go anywhere, you need to be there 24/7, so all I ask is for some support, like for a weekend, we all have our own houses, at least one of us could take her for one weekend, the other could take her for another weekend, this will give me time to take a break, but we are not doing this” (OF).



Tania is deeply hurt by the way things have turned out between her and her siblings. She feels that there is no familial will on the part of her siblings to resolve their issues and come together as siblings should, especially to provide care for their mother:

“it hurts me a lot because it creates a lot of conflict between us, because we do not understand, [...] we take this as an opportunity to create problems and I find myself, by myself, alone, and as for me, I feel that since they do not want to invite her to stay at their place, they do these things to find a reason not to take her in, and all of them are against me”.

Contrary to Cicirelli's (1991) argument that sibling loyalty, and subsequent commitment, may be influenced by the biological bond shared by siblings, when there is conflict between siblings the biological bond that they share becomes irrelevant. This is the case between Tania and her siblings. They have a relationship that is based on nothing but conflict, which is caused by their mother, and by Tania's siblings' lack of involvement in the care of their mother. Here, it can be argued that Tania is the only one who feels obligated towards her mother. Even though when they were children they were close, their relationships have changed significantly over the years:

“Between us siblings there are a lot of conflict, we are a family who has a lot of conflict between us, when in the past, when we were younger, we were all here at home, we were all poor and we lived together, and we were all on good terms, there was solidarity between us” (Tania, OF).

In Tania's case, her siblings refuse categorically to have their mother over at their place even for a weekend. With their mother refusing to stay at the siblings' houses, this is an added excuse for the siblings, in the knowledge that their mother does not want to leave the house where she has lived all her life:

“she herself, she has said that she doesn’t want to go, she doesn’t want to go to these people, but she has never told us why she doesn’t want to go”.

Like Tania, Hendrika, was also the only one who took care of her mother, though her mother did not create any conflict between her and her siblings, like Tania’s mother does. Any tension that was created involved her siblings’ lack of involvement in the care of their mother, especially when Hendrika needed some respite. Contrary to Tania, who is not on good terms with her siblings, and does not even talk to most of them, Hendrika and her siblings (except for a brother who does not keep into contact with any of the other siblings) remain on good terms, but the tension always comes up when the care of their mother comes into question:

“I wish my two brothers would take her for a weekend but when I asked them, they would always say ‘oh I always ask her to let me know when she wants to come but she never calls’ but I said, ‘you know how mum is, she would prefer if you invite her rather than she calls you’, but mum didn’t feel welcome by her daughters-in-law, she felt that she was a burden to them, [...] she can do her own tea but when she goes to their place they would want her to sit from morning to night, ‘don’t do anything, we’ll come do it ourselves’, and she felt she wouldn’t go to their place just to sit down, she wants to get involved with the kids but no, it didn’t happen, so at the end of the day, she told me, she didn’t want to go to their place”.

Hendrika has tried her best to get her siblings involved in the care of their mother as she felt she needed the help and to offer some respite to her daughter who was also active in the care of the grandmother, but that proved to be difficult:

“my sister was not married, I called her and I said please come down [from overseas] and help me with mum, because I cannot do it anymore and she sent me an email and

she said ‘I thought about it, but I feel I cannot take care of my mother because I have never taken care of somebody, I don’t have the patience, I don’t think I will be able to do it’, so, I read that email that morning and I thought, gosh, what do I do,” (Hendrika, OF).

Even though the care of the elderly creates conflict among siblings, at the same time it can be argued that conflict ensures that the elderly receives the best care possible. It can be argued that to some extent, it is in the interest of the elderly to have some sort of conflict between his or her children. The result of this conflict is that the parent is being taken care of by the best person, by the person who will ensure he or she receives the best care. Like in the cases of Tania, Jane, Chantal and Hendrika, even if they are the ones who ended up being the sole adult child providing support for their elderly mother, the fact remains that their elderly mother received/ is receiving such support. This made it easier for the others not to get involved, knowing that there is someone there to provide the care. For example, Hendrika’s siblings would use the excuse of their mother having lived with Hendrika for all these years, and that Hendrika knows their mother’s mentality, what she likes, what she dislikes, “to them I was the one who took care of mum, and I was the one who knew her more than they did”. They are doing what is best for their mother by letting Hendrika, the best candidate provides care for their mother. With a vote of confidence in Hendrika, Hendrika now feels that she is the one ‘chosen by God’ to provide that care and that this is her purpose in life:

“I always ask myself why I was born after four boys, one, two, three, four, after four brothers, why was I the girl to be born after, and then I realised that the reason God has put me on the earth is to take care of my mother until she dies”.

In assuming responsibility for the care of her elderly mother, Hendrika can be considered as one of many women who have been referred to as the ‘sandwich generation’, who is involved in the care of their parents (Evans *et al.*, 2016). The ‘sandwich generation’ consists of women who balance their roles of mother and parent-carer (Evans *et al.*, 2016: 1). So, when both of this is taken into consideration it can be argued that Hendrika have a ‘quadruple shift’. As some radical feminists have argued society has inculcated ideologies in the minds of women through the socialization process where they acquire their gender roles as females, and it is expected of them to look after their husbands and their children and this is their primary role – other roles are secondary (Delphy and Leonard, 1992). In the post-colonial Seychelles context, another woman’s *primary* role is also to take care of the sick and her ageing parents. This can be considered as a legacy of slavery where women were usually left behind to take care of the home, the children and the elderly. Barrett and McIntosh (1982) argue that women have to take on employment as well as work around their children’s schedule, but it can be argued that post-colonial women also have to work around their ageing parents’ schedule as well, as it happened in the case of some of the participants such as Jane, Hendrika and Tania. In the Seychelles, many women do not just face the triple burden of work, housework and emotional work but the burden of care of their ageing parent/s as noted by Hendrika “a husband to take care of, you have to be there for your kids, and you have to be there for your mother”.

The ‘quadruple shift’ is made up of paid work, housework (Oakley, 1974), emotional work (Hochschild, 1983), and care work (Gans, and Silverstein, 2006; Milligan, 2009). There are several examples of women taking up ‘quadruple roles’. This include Maria’s mother who left her family home to go live with her own mother when her mother needed the extra care. Maria, herself is employed full time, helps her parents and has a husband and older children, a young son and a grandson and finds herself shifting roles at times. Chantal

is a teacher, she takes care of her elderly mother, she provides support to her convalescing husband and she has both adult and young children. Dean's wife is another example. Dean's wife has her own business, she has children, grandchildren, she also provides care for her mother-in-law and she visits her elderly disabled mother who lives on another island. Her elderly disabled mother refuses to move to Mahé and Dean's wife cannot move to where her mother is living because her work is on the main island as are her children and grandchildren. A younger sister had to relocate and live with the elderly disabled mother to care for her. I have discussed only the women here because the men tend to have the help of their partner (e.g. Ian, Cyril and Dean) or other family members (e.g. Christophe, Jaques).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed how commitment is developed and displayed by different genders and generations. It has discussed that when relatives reciprocate they do so because there is an established moral code between the members of the family, and because commitment has developed between them. The chapter has discussed that most of the participants do feel a sense of solidarity towards the elderly. When solidarity is shown towards the elderly this is a sign of commitment to them and this is displayed by caring for them and being there for them in their time of need. Taking care of the elderly is not only done out of reciprocity, but the participants also take care of the elderly because they feel a strong sense of obligation towards them even though other family members did not.

In the Seychelles, there is still a strong norm attached to the care of the elderly which remains highly gendered. Hence, the third characteristic of post-colonial societies prevails, which is gender. Care in the Seychelles is gendered. Many young people believe that one of their responsibilities later in life is to take care of their ageing parents, the same way they

have seen their parents taking care of their grandparents. Homes for the elderly remain few in the Seychelles because there is still this persistent belief that the elderly should be cared for by their own, preferable their daughters. In cases where adult children are working and are finding it difficult to provide around the clock care for their dependent ageing parents, carers can be used, as long as carers looking after elderly women are women. This chapter has reiterated the argument that there is little evidence to support the idea of loss of commitment to care, and that care of the elderly is a family practices that perseveres in post-colonial Seychelles. This was clearly illustrated by the two case studies which revealed that even if care can lead to conflict, children still feel a strong sense of obligation to care for their elderly parent/s, showing that vertical relationships are more important in post-colonial Seychelles than horizontal ones. The final chapter of the thesis will bring together the results from the three empirical chapters, highlighting the findings and the implications of the project.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

In the first chapter, I set out my research aim and research questions. The research aim was to establish how family responsibilities, duties and obligations are enacted in the Seychelles and how this varies for different generations and genders. The second chapter focused on the Seychelles and why it is identified as a post-colonial society. The third chapter addressed the project's key concepts. To answer the research questions, I used my position as an insider to approach forty potential participants to get their consent to take part in the research, which was carried out using an interpretive epistemology. This was discussed in the fourth chapter. Since my project was dealing specifically with the family, I had to carry out the research qualitatively using semi-structured interviews and three vignettes. This made it possible to gather the relevant data to address these three research questions:

- What do people in the Seychelles identify as appropriate family responsibilities, duties and obligations?
- How are these obligations negotiated within family relationships?
- How is commitment developed and displayed by men and women and by younger and older adults?

### **Family responsibilities, duties and obligations in post-colonial Seychellois families**

Firstly, this thesis has provided a unique insight into the lives of Seychellois families, not generically, but from the accounts of the forty participants who took part in the study. Once again, I will stress that the project did not attempt at any point to generalise the data gathered. The project started on an exploratory note to explore the different family structures that the forty participants grew up in and are currently residing in. The participants came from different types of family structures and it was seen that there is no fixed pattern about family structures that can be found in the sample. So, there are not only households that contain families, but also couples who do not have children and even those living on their own. Basically, there is not one which can be said to be dominant as they tend to be in flux. Most of the younger participants who are living in a single parent family are living with their mother and some of the older participants are single mothers. Living with a single mother has been identified to be a norm, said to be a legacy of slavery and to be distinct to the Creole family.

The contemporary nature of the Creole Seychellois family was discussed according to the findings of the project. The findings revealed that the Seychellois family is characterized by distinctive racial, power and gender issues because the Seychelles is a post-colonial society. This is reflected in the responses of most of the participants, though there was a difference between the two generations' responses. Racial issues were discussed mainly by the older generation, though this did not mean that the younger generation hasn't experienced racism or was unaware of it. The older participants pointed out that this was a product of colonisation. Considering that they grew up during the colonisation period only they referred to this time. This reveals that the history of slavery and colonisation has indeed impacted in some way family life in the Seychelles. The dynamics of family relations can



be said to relate to racial tensions between family members, where the darker the relative skin colour is, the less 'loved' that person was. Here, some anecdotes proved to be useful and relevant. The racial issues that can be seen in the Seychelles reflect Fanon's (1952, 1961) writings on post-colonial societies.

The older generation was also the main one who focused on the second characteristic of post-colonial societies which has to do with power. The state has power over its people and one way of maintaining this power is to have its people depend on it, which has been identified by Fanon (1952, 1961) and Memmi (1974) as the 'dependency complex' of colonised people. Here several participants stated that people should not depend on the state but rather on their family members. Family members who rely on the state were considered as not fulfilling their responsibilities and duties. Some participants were aware that the state does have certain duties, and this should only be towards actual orphans. The older female participants were also adamant that the state should not get involved in the care of the elderly. Most of the younger women were against the idea of institutionalizing an elderly parent. In contrast to the older women who firmly stated that it should entirely be the family/children who should take care of the elderly, some of the older men noted that institutions beyond the family and the government also have a role to play and this belief was shared by the younger men. However, colonisation has not just produced this dependency complex but has created gender issues.

Gender has been seen throughout the project to be the main characteristic of post-colonial Seychellois families who took part in the research. It was so pertinent that it was discussed in all three of the empirical chapters. This is where the family practices approach proved to be very useful. This is because the family practices approach focuses also on gendered practices. However, it was discussed that the family practices approach did not engage with feminism. This is where feminist post-colonial analysis proved useful where it

revealed the contrasts between Seychellois families and those found in other post-colonial settings like the Caribbean and how certain family practices differ or are the same. Feminist post-colonial analysis also revealed that there is a huge gap in the literature about gender in post-colonial island states. There is a plethora of literature about feminism generically but where feminist post-colonialism is concerned specifically there is this gap that needs to be filled. This is so because the experiences of post-colonial women are different from women living in other societies.

Through the participants' responses and from my position as an insider it can be ascertained that indeed the Seychelles is matrifocal. Here, matrifocality is when members of the extended family are included in the household, they are more likely to be relatives of the mother. This was pertinent and was the case for many of the participants from both genders and both generations. Pertinent gender issues included the sexual division of labour which takes place at most of the participants' home. Sons who are still living with their parents do not particularly get involved in household chores, but those who are in a relationship and living with a partner share conjugal roles. Here it was seen that certain chores are being done by both genders equally but there are still some that are being done predominantly by women such as cleaning the house, doing the laundry, ironing, taking care of the sick and anything to do with young children, whilst the gardening remains the man's domain. Certain participants said that there are certain norms attached to particular chores whilst others suggested that this was the case only in the past. To have an idea on how things were done in the past participants spoke about the kind of chores they did whilst growing up. This was discussed mainly by the older participants who were brought up in the late 60s and early 70s, which was essentially during colonial times. In some families, a gendered division of labour persists but in others there is none.

Alongside this division there was also the issue of ‘inside chores’ and ‘outside chores’. Inside chores are those that are done by women and outside chores are done by men. However, it was seen that there are double standards in the sense that boys are being encouraged to do chores which are culturally associated with the female gender whereas girls are not being given this opportunity by their parents. Boys also tend to be excused from household chores. In this sense, it is the girls’ duties to be more involved in doing chores and boys are excused because they happen to be boys. Notably, gender practices in certain family structures vary. A single mother is not always left with doing all the chores by herself. For some women who have a partner most of the chores are being done by themselves and their daughters. For some women who are married their husbands help them with the chores. There is however a duty that remains predominantly the woman’s responsibility and that is to provide care to either the sick or the elderly. This is referred to as the gendered division of care.

Here the findings revealed that most of the older generation, especially the women were not keen on having a man caring for an elderly woman. This duty was seen to be reserved mainly for the female gender and it was argued that daughters have a moral obligation towards their parents. Some mothers have already spoken to their daughters about this and they expect their daughters to assume this role when they become dependent. Gendered roles in the Seychelles have not caught up with structural changes. This was reflected in some of the older men’s responses. When the men exercised their responsibility towards their elderly parent they did so through their wives. Gendered obligations seem to be particular clear in the Seychelles’ cultural context where most cases of assistance are from daughters to mothers though there are cases of sons being active in the care of their elderly parent/s. Some of the male participants have been active in the care of their elderly parent though they were not the only ones doing that – their siblings were also involved, especially

their female siblings. This was seen as equity where they value their mother's decency in light of her personal care. So, personal care of the sick and the elderly, especially the elderly mother remains a duty that is being done by women. If men were to be involved in the care of the elderly, they could only do so when the elderly is a man. However, it was the responsibility of women to take care of the sick regardless of that person's gender. The findings showed a clear contrast between the younger and older generation. The younger generation, especially the younger women, was more open minded about having male carers.

Care did not just involve the elderly but the sick as well. This was identified as a responsibility performed by women, and it was mostly discussed by the women who have had several experiences of taking care of the sick. The findings also showed that to some extent the responsibility of taking care of the sick is not just for the women, as some of the men have been actively involved in the care of their sick parent, especially sick mothers. However, most of the men did so with the help of their female relatives which proved that care remains gendered in the Seychelles.

To perceive how participants acknowledged that there is a notion of familial responsibility a vignette describing a son facing the dilemma of what to do about his parents who live on another island, after they have both been injured in a car accident was used. There was no consensus over what should happen as the participants had a variety of views on what the son should/shouldn't do. So, in general, all the participants were in agreement that the son should do something, but this could be achieved in different ways. So, this vignette clearly demonstrates that there is the agreed norm that adult children should do something to support their parents and this is one of their responsibilities.

I discussed the responsibilities that were being practiced by the participants. These include parents raising their children themselves, sons and daughters taking care of their

elderly parents, women and men taking care of the sick, supporting each other when there is sickness and the care of children. All the older participants have done or are actively practicing these responsibilities. Alongside these responsibilities, there are others which the younger generations are involved in. These are the established family practices of visiting key family members, seeing family members daily and regularly, providing support to parents and grandparents. For some participants seeing a non-resident family member daily has become routinized and any change in routine is a cause for worry. Seeing family members regularly is made possible because the Seychelles is so small.

A responsibility which has been identified as a main family practices is to help family members. A few participants noted that at times they have not received help when they requested it. However, that was rare. Most of the participants provided help and received help. In the Seychelles help is not only given because the person in need happens to be a relative. Help is also given because of the kind of relationship family members have with other family members. The main kind of relationship where help is mostly given is the relationship between parents and their adult children. Here older parents noted that even if their adult children are now independent, this does not mean that their obligations towards them decrease. They argued that some responsibilities are rather replaced by others, and some remained. For some of them this is their moral duty as a parent. Some parents still help their adult children financially, when the adult daughter is pregnant, and they help with childcare. Older male participants focused mostly on helping their adult children financially whereas older females focused on helping their pregnant daughters and with childcare. Help is also given because the participants' faith requires this of them. The Seychelles is a predominantly Catholic country and the influence of Catholicism persists. It was mostly the older participants, notably the older women who are still involved in rituals that relate to

their faith and some of these rituals have even become family practices. This include attending church every Sunday, praying and tending to the grave of the departed.

Another responsibility which Seychellois family members practice is visiting the sick in hospital. This has been identified as a social convention. Here family members cooperate and take turns to offer help to the sick relative. Mostly this is done by women though some men are involved. Family members also come together when there is a bereavement. Death is a definite way to make family members who are not on speaking terms come together, speak to each other, and when the mutual loved one has been buried, these family members go back to being estranged until there is another death. Again, women are the ones who are mostly involved in funeral preparations. As discussed, many family practices in the Seychelles are gendered practices.

As the Seychelles is a post-colonial island state, it is important to stress that in the Seychelles context, it is the intersection of race and gender that is relevant – postcolonialism reveals the complexities of these relations, which a monochrome family practices perspective would ignore. However, post-colonialist writings about gender relations are problematic in a Seychelles context. Here, the gender dimension of family practices has proven to be of relevance. Family practices are gendered in the Seychelles, yet gender power relations have not been politicised in the Seychelles as in other post-colonial contexts. This is not to infer that gender is not significant, indeed family practices are one of the most important ways through which gendered identities are constructed and maintained. So, Morgan's (1999) family practices can be argued to be relevant to the Seychelles context in this case, as certain family practices can be considered as gender practices and it was revealed in the empirical chapters how this is the case in the Seychelles. Women in the Seychelles fare considerably well compared to other post-colonial women, yet there is still

the strong cultural belief that certain responsibilities remain the women's. Women are still considered as the ones who are morally obligated to take on caring duties. This can be argued to be inculcated in the Seychellois culture as most of the young women are aware that it is their duty and a moral obligation to take care of their parents when they become dependent. There is this cultural expectation.

Post-colonialism is relevant, but it does not explain gender issues in its entirety – and this is where family practices becomes relevant. Post-colonialism does help us with understanding racial issues and power issues but the elephant in the room is gender. Gender has been seen to be the most important of the three characteristics of post-colonial societies, in post-colonial Seychelles. Family practices do not address the complexities around race and ethnic relations where the skin tone can influence family relations. Such complexities are addressed by post-colonialism. Here it was shown how some participants have lived experiences of racism which has had an impact on the relationship they had with whoever was racist towards them. So, these relationships were conditional on the colour of their skin. Some interracial couples even faced certain crises. The dynamics of family relations related to racial tensions between family members, where the darker family members were 'liked less'. All these complexities were addressed by post-colonialism. However, post-colonialism does not address the gender issues that are relevant to post-colonial Seychelles as Morgan's family practices – gender practices – do. Hence the family practices approach addresses some of the gender issues that post-colonial writers have not focussed on and post-colonial literature addresses the racial/ethnic issues that are not considered by the Eurocentric family practices approach. This is why a feminist post-colonial analysis is important.

## **Obligations within family relationships**

Secondly, the thesis has shown how obligations operate within family relationships in the Seychelles. When a family member feels that he or she has certain obligations, that person would do his or her utmost to fulfil these obligations. I have discussed how mothers feel strongly about their role as mothers and even feel obligated towards their adult children. This was revealed through a vignette which asked the participants what they think a young couple who needs money for a deposit on a mortgage to finance the building of a house. Almost all the older participants said that they would help the young couple. They did not suggest what the parents of the young couple should do, or what the young couple should do. They focused on themselves as parents and said that they should help the young couple, and this is what they would do because they have a duty, a moral obligation as parents. So, obligations also have moral implications. For these older participants, they feel this moral obligation to help their children. However, the data revealed that in some cases there are parents who do not feel any obligations whatsoever towards their children, be it small children or adult children. These parents have been identified as absent fathers.

The younger generation focussed on their absent father who they did not consider as family. The absent father has played almost no role in the upbringing of his offspring. Whilst the older generation had more of a forgiving attitude towards their absent father this was not the case with the younger generation as some of them remained bitter by their fathers' lack of involvement in their upbringing. Several of the young participants refuse to have anything to do with their father, even the fathers who were not necessarily absent but who have done certain unforgivable things like cheating on their mothers. These fathers have essentially failed to show their obligations towards their children. Now, many of these children do not feel a sense of duty or obligation towards these fathers.



However, there were fathers who, despite not being present daily in the lives of their children because of separation or divorce, were still involved in the lives of their children, hence fulfilling their obligation as fathers. Fathers who took part in the study showed their moral obligation to their children even if these children no longer live with them. The data showed that in the case of the participants there were no cases of split residency. The children of participants who were separated or divorced lived with their mother and would stay overnight or over the weekend with their father, revealing a strong discourse that living with a single father is not the norm – which has been shown to be a product of colonisation. This is the case for some older participants who grew up with a grand-parent or an aunt when the mother died. The few cases of young participants living with a father was so because of the death of the mother or the mother not living in the Seychelles.

The findings have shown that there is a strong sense of obligation which has become inculcated in family members, especially daughters where the care of their parents is concerned. It seems that this strong sense of moral obligation is being transferred to the younger generation especially the young women. It was revealed that most of the young women have already thought about taking care of their elderly parent when the time comes. They have noted that they have a moral obligation towards their parent and they will fulfil this by providing care to them. Some of them have even suggested that they would move their parents to come live with them to make caring for them easier. So, have some of the younger men, especially those who are an only child who will end up caring for their mother by default. These sons are very committed to their mothers that for some of them it is unthinkable to put their mother in a home. They have a strong sense of obligation towards their mother, especially as for most of them their mother raised them single-handedly. Daughters are very obligated towards mothers. Sons are also very obligated towards their mothers. Hence, obligation is felt towards mainly the female gender – the mother.

The participants who took part in the project were the ones who felt strong obligations, and they discussed how some of their family members did not feel obligated, for example, by not helping in the care of the elderly. This revealed that feeling obligated towards the elderly was not something automatic. Children do not automatically feel obligated towards their parents. This is important to discuss here because as the data revealed most of the older participants are or have been involved in the care of their elderly parent/s and they have been doing it, not because of the prospect of inheritance, or getting something in return, but because of a strong sense of obligation towards their parents. It is important to note that those participants agreed to take part in a research about family responsibilities and obligations in the Seychelles because they themselves had a strong sense of obligation. People who would tell an immoral tale (someone who is not morally obligated) do not take part in research – the cultural and moral code is so strong that it would be difficult for them to justify their actions/inactions. This is the reason why I did not have any participants who were not actively taking care of their parents. They simply did not choose to take part in the study.

In this thesis, I provided evidence that obligations are not negotiated, that responsibilities are rather products of obligations. This is the case as some people feel obligated and others do not. As discussed previously, I was unable to engage with anyone who did not feel obligated because none of them took part in a research which was about family obligations and responsibilities, which is why ultimately, I ended up with only participants who are obligated in their duties as sons, daughters, parents, siblings and other roles. However, this doesn't mean that there wasn't any negotiation. There was some, but this was mostly between spouses and between parents and their children. Implicit negotiation took place between younger adults and their parents, usually their mothers. What was interesting in the case of the young adults was that they tended to do certain things, not

necessarily because it has been negotiated but to avoid drama from their mother. Also, some older parents noted that they told their children what to do and this was their duty as parents. Their children hence, do what their parents have told them because it is their duty as children.

So, among most of the participants who took part in the research, responsibilities are products of rules of obligations. In practice, there is a strong sense of obligation for family members to take their responsibility and there is also what can be referred to as the expectation of obligation. So rather than negotiation there is expectation. Furthermore, this issue of expectation is further stressed upon when participants discussed that it is often a woman who tends to be in control. In the case of the older women, it was mostly them or an older sister; in the case of the older men it was mostly an older sister; in the case of the younger generation it was mostly their mother or an aunt who was in control. When these women assume control, the participants agreed that things get done and go efficiently. The participants noted that it is typical for that person to take control and when faced with a certain situation, for example a death, everyone knows that this person is in charge and they would respond positively to that person. There is usually no negotiation and the family members are told what to do and they respond accordingly. At times, there is not even the need for anyone to take the lead because everyone already knows what is expected of them.

So, the project has shown that obligations and responsibilities are not always negotiated, that indeed family members tend to automatically know what is expected of them, and that usually there is someone who assumes control. This person tends to be female. Even if obligations are not negotiated most of the time, family members take their obligations seriously, to the extent that they know what is expected of them, and act on these expectations. In this case, the thesis has clearly shown that my research has moved beyond my initial research questions and it was not limited by them.

### **The development and display of commitment**

Thirdly, I have provided further evidence which contradicts Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (1995) theory of individualisation. Throughout the accounts of the participants I have shown how they feel committed to particular family members. Even if people have other commitments they make sure that they fulfil additional commitments. Relatives are aware that when support is given at one point in time, later, there is the expectation to 'return in kind' – essentially reciprocity. I argued that it is through reciprocity that commitment develops between family members. I used a vignette to capture the participants' values regarding being reciprocal. Here they were asked what an ex-daughter-in-law should do when her ex-mother-in-law who used to take care of her children falls sick. All the participants said that the ex-daughter-in-law should reciprocate. Some of the participants especially the women empathise with the two women and noted what they would do as well. A history of mutual help shows that commitment has been developed and this commitment is displayed when the help is given.

One way that family members display their commitment to each other is through the support they provide to each other. All the participants taking part in the research agreed that relatives should be the first line of support. When family members respond to help that is asked and then provide the necessary support, they do so because they have a level of commitment to each other and one way of displaying this is by responding positively. The data revealed that all the participants have received support when they needed it except for one participant. The flow of support between parents and children is one type of support that is very common in the Seychelles. Support was given to parents from their children and to children from their parents. This kind of support has been identified to be a family practices. Support is mostly from mothers to their daughter though there is still a reliance on mothers from sons as well. However, the data is not representative enough to show whether sons rely

more on their mothers than daughters do. Nevertheless, my data reveals that more sons do rely on their mothers compared to daughters. Daughters who have a family of their own still rely on their mother, especially where childcare is concerned.

Another way that commitment is displayed is through the care of the elderly. I identified that there is a third ethic of care in the Seychelles, and that it is a dominant one. This is the care of the elderly. Here participants show their commitment to their elderly parents by taking care of them. It was only those who took part in the research who were committed to their elderly parent as some of them mentioned how their siblings or other relatives do not provide care for the elderly family members which reveal a lack of commitment towards the elderly on the part of those siblings. The participants agreed that it is children who should provide care to their elderly parent especially the women. These participants are not only suggesting that children should be the ones taking care of their parents, but they have been the ones responsible for the care of their parents. Many of the older participants, especially the older women have taken care of or are currently caring for an elderly parent. Most of the younger women plan to take care of their parents and their parents are in some way involved in the care of their grandparents. So, these adults have an obligation towards their parents and are committed to them.

Fourthly, the thesis has argued that as a postcolonial society colonialism has indeed left its mark and that is why women in general respond to certain familial duties and obligations. There is this strong sense of moral obligation towards the elderly by many women, who noted that children should be the ones who provide care for the elderly and that the elderly should not be institutionalised. The thesis has shown that indeed there is intergenerational solidarity especially towards the elderly and care is provided. Most of the older women are committed to provide care for their elderly parent. Some of them have

already done so until the parent has passed away. Some of the older men have been involved as well though they took more of a laid-back approach especially if they have female siblings.

The findings have revealed that in the Seychelles women are not faced with the burden of the triple role but that of the quadruple role. This includes working, housework duties, emotional labour and caring for an elderly parent. Indeed, it is fair to argue that caring for an elderly parent involves all those triple roles. It is something that is physical, emotional and for many Seychellois spiritual. Taking care of an elderly person is daunting and involves giving up many things in life. It has shown that members of this 'sandwich generation' are not only taking care of their home, partner, having a career, but they are involved in caring for their elderly parents. Furthermore, they have dependent children to take care of as well as providing support to their independent children through the form of childcare of their grandchildren.

Finally, the thesis has shown how intergenerational family relations could be based on either solidarity, conflict or can be ambivalent. Intergenerational solidarity shows how there is commitment towards the person receiving care. Here a young person showed her commitment to her grandmother who brought her up by providing care for her. Intergenerational family relations can also be based on conflict and here commitment is for someone else rather than the one who is receiving the care. So just because care is being provided to a person that does not necessarily mean that the provider is committed towards that person or even care about that person. One of the most challenging aspects of providing care for the elderly is that it creates conflict between family members. This conflict can either be created by the person who needs care, usually an elderly mother, or by siblings' lack of involvement in the care of the parent. The conflict between siblings reveals that among the

participants, horizontal relationships are not necessarily ones that are based on solidarity, but rather ones that are based on conflict. It can be argued then, that vertical relationships are more valued so there is more intergenerational solidarity, than intragenerational solidarity. This is evident as many young adults have ascertained that they plan to take care of their parents when they become dependent. This is further evident when participants discussed the person they rely on and this was mainly between two generations than those of the same generation. Intergenerational solidarity can also be ambivalent where it was seen that children provide care for their elderly parent even if they do not get along with that parent, but the moral obligation is so strong that the child/children would not have it any other way. This was illustrated by a case study.

Whilst several concepts are gendered this thesis has shown that commitment is one that is not gendered in the Seychelles context. Men are as committed to the care of their elderly parents as women. Even if more women have been involved in the care of their elderly parents some men have been and some of them are actively involved. In the case of the younger men they have already thought about this and some have claimed that this is in their future plans, even if bathing their mother might prove problematic to some of them, they are so committed to their mother that they would be willing to do that. The only difference that commitment is displayed differently is between the younger and older generation where the younger generation help a family member but is not committed to that person directly but to another person.

### **Policy implications**

Even though this research did not aim to involve policy development and implementation, the findings do point towards certain policies. Families should be given

more support by the state so that they can cater for the needs of the elderly without needing to consider institutionalising the elderly. As the government is still very much involved in providing houses for many Seychellois families, there should be certain houses that are suitable to accommodate an elderly parent as most houses being built are for small families. In building these houses and flats which makes it impossible to have an elderly parent living with the rest of the family the elderly is either left behind or needs to be institutionalised.

### **Considerations for further research in this field**

As some of the data have revealed, sons do have a special bond with their mothers as well. So, research on the relationship between mothers and their sons which has been a neglected area of study in the family could be considered. There could also be research about the relationship between grandmothers and their granddaughters. Even though the Seychelles has been considered as a society which advocates the importance of vertical relationships, research about horizontal relationships could also be considered. This includes the relationship between couples (contrast between cohabitation and marriage, for example), relationship between siblings (either between sisters or between brothers or mixed siblings). Considering that homosexuality was recently legalised in the Seychelles such families could also be the focus of future research especially as many Seychellois unfortunately are homophobic. As the literature review chapters have shown there is a lack of literature about doing gender in small post-colonial island societies, the experiences of women in post-colonial island states and their quadruple roles, and on post-colonial Seychelles in general. There are so many areas of research which relate to the sociology of family in the Seychelles.

My PhD has shown that there is a relationship between post-colonialism and the family practices approach. This was an unanticipated finding of the PhD. Upon reflection I



have found out that whilst post-colonialism focuses on societies which were once colonised, where some relationships are conditional based on skin colour, and family practices is more relevant to a white western family – where there is more of a balanced/ shared conjugal roles – this thesis has shown that in bringing the family practices approach into a post-colonial setting, the gender issues that post-colonial writers do not address could be addressed – by the family practices approach. Hence, the family practices idea helps to understand the gender issues that take place within a post-colonial setting. In this sense, even if the family practices idea is an English one, it can still be used to explain the gender issues that take place within a post-colonial setting. Hence, this thesis has brought a contribution to post-colonial literature, especially to small island post-colonial states. It has shown how characteristics of post-colonial societies persist even after these societies have gone through independence for several decades. For example, in the case of the Seychelles, it has been four decades since its independence and yet certain colonial traits persevere. As discussed in the thesis, there is this hypocrisy around racial issues and not only those who were brought up during colonial times have felt racial discrimination. Furthermore, this thesis has shown that even if women in the Seychelles fare considerable better than other women in post-colonial societies, there are certain family practices that are still considered as gendered practices and are done mainly by women. Here, I have shown that there is a third ethic of care – which is the care of the elderly. This thesis has shown how gender remains an important post-colonial trait in the way family is practiced in the Seychelles. Gender was seen to be discussed in all three empirical chapters. On a final note, even though this PhD project has been challenging it has proved to be an exciting, enriching and life-changing experience. The research community was very responsive, and I was moved by people's willingness to take part in the study. Finally, the post-colonial Creole Seychellois family is the focus of sociological research.

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## Appendices

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Vignettes**

### *Vignette 1*

Let us say there is an elderly couple who lives on Praslin and they have an accident. The man broke one of his legs and his wife broke her right arm. They have a son, a teacher, and he lives on Mahé with his wife and their two young children. His wife is on maternity leave after the birth of their younger child. What do you think the son should do? (Derivative from Finch and Mason, 1993: 63).

### *Vignette 2*

If someone, say, an ex-mother-in-law, who took care of her grand-children when their mother had to work and did not accept any payments from her ex daughter-in-law falls ill. What do you think the ex-daughter-in-law should do? (Derivative from Finch and Mason, 1993: 34-35).

### *Vignette 3*

Suppose a young couple need an extra SR15 000 to put on their first home as a deposit and they cannot borrow the money from the bank which is giving them the mortgage. What do you think they should do? (Derivative from Finch and Mason, 1993: 209).

## **Appendix 2:**

### **List of Tables**



Table 1 – Sample characteristics.

<b>Older women</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of children and age (grandchildren?)</b>
Hendrika	55	Married	GCSE	Businesswoman	Two daughters (30 and 24 years old), one grandson (baby)
Loraine	43	Married	BA	Lecturer	One daughter (19 years old)
Maria	42	Married	GCE	Bank Manager	One daughter and son (21 and 19 years old) from previous relationship and one son with current spouse (10 years old), one grandson
Chantal	42	Married	Certificate in Teaching	Primary school teacher	Two daughters (20 and 11 years old) and one son (8 years old)

Olivia	44	Married	NYS	Cleaner/housekeeper	One daughter (25 years old) from a previous relationship and one son (14 years old)
Tania	49	Single (divorced)	Seychelles Polytechnic – Secretarial Studies	Assistant Administrative Officer	Three daughters (27, 24 and 18 years old), two grandsons (10 and 2 years old), one granddaughter (2 years old)
Gemma	41	Cohabiting	NYS	Prison Officer	One son (19 years old) and two daughters (19 and 10 years old)
Alice	48	Single	Seychelles Polytechnic – Secretarial Studies	Office Assistant	Three sons (age not given) and one daughter (26 years old), one granddaughter (one-year old)

Jane	52	Single	Form 2	Unemployed	Three sons (30 and 17-year-old twins) and one daughter (22 years old)
Suzy	41	Single	Seychelles Polytechnic – Secretarial Studies	Secretary	One daughter (17 years old) two sons (age not given)
<b>Older men</b>					
Cyril	52	Cohabiting	Medical Degree (Specialized )	Specialist Doctor	One son (19 years old) and one daughter (14 years old) from previous marriage
Dominic	54	Married	Form 3	Self-employed	Two sons (one adopted, one biological both adults), one granddaughter (8 years old)

John	45	Married	Diploma 2 in Teaching	Taxi operator	One daughter (21 years old), one son (12 years old)
Christophe	43	Cohabiting	BA	Journalist	One daughter (20 years old) from previous marriage
Jaques	55	Married	GCSE	Director	Two adult children (below 30 years)
Pierre	54	Married	BA	Education Officer	Two sons (22 and 10 years old), one daughter (21 years old)
Matthew	53	In a relationship	Year 6	Manual worker in maintenance	Two daughters (23 and 17 years old)
Dean	55	Married	ACCA	Businessman	One stepson (38 years old), one stepdaughter (34 years old), one daughter (29 years old), one son (21 years old)

Sam	54	Single	Higher Diploma in journalism	Editor	One son (20 years old)
Ian	45	Married	BA and PG Diploma	Human Resources Manager	One daughter (23 years old) and one son (18 years old)
<b>Younger women</b>					
Olie	19	Single	GCE	Medical student	None
Teresa	24	In a relationship	BSc	Project Manager	None
Tessa	27	Cohabiting	BA	Corporate Administrator	One baby girl
Stephy	23	Cohabiting	BSc	Human Resource Officer	One two-year-old son
Sandra	24	Married	Bachelor's in education	Student Teacher	Young son
Molly	22	'Complicated relationship'	GCE	Student	None
Brenda	27	Single (widow)	Diploma in Social Work	Social Worker	One son (10 years old) and one

					daughter (2 years old)
Vivienne	24	Married	GCE	Junior Draughtman	Two young children (a boy and a girl)
Meryl	27	Cohabiting	Diploma in Teaching	Primary Teacher	One daughter (2 years) from previous relationship
Hannah	24	Single (bi-curious)	GCE	Student	None
<b>Younger men</b>					
Steve	26	In a relationship	BA	Third Secretary	None
Carlos	20	Single	GCE	Student	None
Travis	26	In a relationship	Year 11	Police officer	None
Tony	24	Single	GCE	Assistant Statistician	None
Josh	29	Single	BSc	Lecturer	One young son
Fabrice	19	Single	GCE	Student	None

Evans	22	Married	GCE	Business Development Officer	Two young children
Laurent	23	Cohabiting	Diploma	Air Traffic Controller	None
Neil	21	In a relationship	GCE	Student	None
Daniel	20	Single	GCE	Assistant Analysis Programmer	None

NOTE:

\*NYS – National Youth Service – British Equivalent Year 11

\*Seychelles Polytechnic – British Equivalent College

Table 2 – The family structures that participants were brought up in and are currently living in now.

<b>Older females</b>	<b>Family structure participants grew up in</b>	<b>Family structure participants are living in now</b>
Hendrika	Nuclear (parents married) – father was sole breadwinner	Extended
Loraine	Single parent (mother)	Nuclear (married)
Maria	Nuclear (parents cohabiting)	Extended
Chantal	Single parent (mother)	Nuclear (married)
Olivia	Nuclear (parents cohabiting)	Nuclear (married)
Tania	Single parent (mother)	Extended
Gemma	Extended	Nuclear (Cohabiting)
Alice	Nuclear (parents married) – father sole breadwinner	Extended
Jane	Extended	Single parent
Suzy	Nuclear (parents married) - father sole breadwinner	Extended
<b>Older males</b>		



Cyril	Nuclear (parents married) - father sole breadwinner	Divorced, cohabiting and children visit often
Dominic	Extended	Nuclear (married)
John	Extended then single parent	Nuclear (married)
Christophe	Single parent (mother)	Divorced, cohabiting
Jaques	Nuclear (parents married)	Nuclear (married)
Pierre	Grew up with grandparents	Nuclear (married)
Matthew	Single parent (mother)	Single father
Dean	Nuclear (parents married) - father sole breadwinner	Nuclear (married)
Sam	Single parent (mother)	Divorced, currently single
Ian	Nuclear (parents married) - father sole breadwinner	Nuclear
<b>Younger females</b>		
Olie	Nuclear (but mother died when she was 12)	Single parent (father)
Teresa	Extended	Extended

Tessa	Nuclear (parents married)	Extended (living with in-laws)
Stephy	Extended	Nuclear (cohabiting with fiancé)
Sandra	Extended	Nuclear family (married)
Molly	Nuclear (parents married)	Extended
Brenda	Extended	Extended
Vivienne	Extended	Nuclear (married)
Meryl	Grew up with grandmother	Nuclear (cohabiting with fiancé)
Hannah	Nuclear (parents divorced when she was 12)	Single parent (father)
<b>Younger males</b>		
Steve	Nuclear	Extended
Carlos	Extended	Single parent (mother)
Travis	Single parent (mother)	Nuclear (mother and step-father cohabiting)
Tony	Extended	Extended
Josh	Extended	Nuclear (mother and step-father cohabiting)

Fabrice	Extended	Nuclear (mother and step-father cohabiting)
Evans	Extended	Nuclear (married)
Laurent	Extended	In cohabitation
Neil	Nuclear (parents cohabiting)	Father is now in prison so family is single mother with her grown-up children
Daniel	Nuclear	Single parent (mother)

Table 3 – Household duties that older family members are involved in.

<b>Group/ Responsibility</b>	<b>Older Women</b>	<b>Older Men</b>
<b>Shopping</b>	Mostly done by the women themselves on their own	Mostly done by both the men and the wife, at times the wife doing it by herself
<b>Cooking</b>	Half of the women does the cooking themselves, half is done by their husband	Either the men or their wives or both do it together
<b>Doing the dishes</b>	Mostly done by the husband	Mostly done by both or the children
<b>Cleaning the house</b>	Most women clean the house by themselves with two getting help from their daughter	-The wife is responsible -Three of them share with their partners - Their adult daughters
<b>Ironing</b>	Most do their own ironing	The wife does it
<b>Laundry</b>	This is done mostly by the women themselves	The wife does it
<b>Gardening</b>	Mostly done by the husband or the male relative like son/brother	The man himself
<b>Illness</b>	All the women are the ones responsible for someone who is ill	Either their mother or their wife who is responsible

<b>Advice when child is sick</b>	Most women talk to their mothers, some even asking for herbal remedies	They get advice mostly from the wife and some do not even get involved
<b>Problems at work</b>	Share this with their mother or friends	They share this with their wife
<b>Pregnancy</b>	Most women ask advice from their mother	The wife asks her mother – it is ‘a women thing’
<b>Taking care of young children</b>	Most women rely on their mothers to take care of their young children	Few rely on their mother and most rely on their wife’s mother or nursery

Table 4 – Household duties that younger family members are involved in.

<b>Group/ Responsibility</b>	<b>Younger Women</b>	<b>Younger Men</b>
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>-Done mostly by mother in the case of those living with their parent/s</p> <p>-Shared with partner for those who live with partner</p>	Done mostly by their mother, they rarely get involved (except for Evans and Laurent)
<b>Cooking</b>	<p>-Done mostly by mother in the case of those living with their parent/s</p> <p>-Shared in the case of those living with partner</p>	Mostly done by mother or step-father, they do not really get involved, except for Laurent who cooks every day
<b>Doing the dishes</b>	<p>-Done mostly by the father for those who live with parents</p> <p>-This is shared for those living with partner</p>	<p>-Done mostly by mother</p> <p>-Laurent and Evans share this with their partner</p>
<b>Cleaning the house</b>	Mother, and they help their mother	Mother and sisters (except for Evans who helps his wife, and Laurent's partner does it)

<b>Ironing</b>	Do their own	This is done mostly by their mother (except for Evans and Laurent and Travis who do their own)
<b>Laundry</b>	Some their mother does it and some do their own	This is done mostly by their mother (except for Evans and Laurent)
<b>Gardening</b>	Father does it	Mother and father/stepfather do it (Laurent does it himself)
<b>Illness</b>	-Their mother takes care of them  -In cases of young mothers themselves	Their mother takes care of them
<b>Advice when child is sick</b>	Ask their mother	Ask their mother
<b>Problems at work</b>	Speak to their mother	Speak to their mother
<b>Pregnancy</b>	Speak to their mother for those who have children	Unsure
<b>Taking care of young children</b>	Their mother	Their mother

Table 5 – Participants’ religion and whether they practise religious rituals.

<b>Older women</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Attend mass/religious ceremony?</b>	<b>Pray?</b>	<b>Visit graves?</b>
Hendrika	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Loraine	Pentecost	Every Saturday	Yes	Yes
Maria	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Didn’t say
Chantal	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Didn’t say
Olivia	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Tania	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Gemma	Catholic	Sometimes	Yes	Didn’t say
Alice	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Jane	Catholic	Sometimes	Yes	Yes
Suzy	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
<b>Older men</b>				
Cyril	Catholic	Seldom	Yes	Didn’t say
Dominic	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Didn’t say
John	Catholic	Seldom	No	No



Christophe	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Jaques	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Pierre	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Didn't say
Matthew	Catholic	Seldom	No	Didn't say
Dean	Catholic	Seldom	Yes	Didn't say
Sam	Evangelical Christian	Every week	Yes	Didn't say
Ian	Church of Christ	Every week	Yes	Yes
<b>Younger women</b>				
Olie	Catholic	Seldom	Yes	Yes
Teresa	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Tessa	Anglican	Seldom	No	No
Stephy	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Didn't say
Sandra	Catholic	Not at all	No	No
Molly	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Didn't say
Brenda	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes

Vivienne	Catholic	Seldom	No	No
Meryl	Catholic	Sometimes	No	No
Hannah	Catholic	Not at all	No	No
<b>Younger men</b>				
Steve	Catholic	Sometimes	No	Didn't say
Carlos	Catholic	Rarely	No	Didn't say
Travis	Atheist	Not at all	No	Didn't say
Tony	Catholic	Often	Yes	Yes
Josh	Catholic	Rarely	Yes	Didn't say
Fabrice	Catholic	Rarely	No	Didn't say
Evans	Anglican	Rarely	No	Didn't say
Laurent	Catholic	Every Sunday	Yes	Yes
Neil	None	Not at all	No	Didn't say
Daniel	Catholic	Rarely	No	Didn't say

Table 6 – Participants whose family members have died and their involvement in the funeral preparation.

<b>Older women</b>	<b>Family member who have died</b>	<b>Who was involved in funeral</b>
Hendrika	Father, most recently mother	She was responsible for all the funeral preparations
Loraine	Grandmother, two cousins, most recently a cousin was murdered	The older family members
Maria	Grandmothers	She was involved only in her paternal grandmother's funeral
Chantal	Grandmother, mother-in-law	Older family members
Olivia	Father	She and her siblings
Tania	Son-in-law	She was involved along with her daughter
Gemma	Father, cousins	She and her siblings
Alice	Mother, father	She and her siblings
Jane	Father, mother, aunt	She was involved more in her father's as she is his only child
Suzy	Father	She and her siblings
<b>Older men</b>		

Cyril	Father	He and his siblings
Dominic	Mother	He and his siblings, especially his sisters
John	Cousin	The cousin's mother and other close female relatives
Christophe	Mother, father	Mother mostly his sister, for father he and his siblings
Jaques	Father, mother	He and his siblings
Pierre	Mother (he was 4 years old), father, grandparents	He did not get involve in his father's funeral but attended the ceremony – he was involved in his grandparents' funeral
Matthew	Father, wife	He and his siblings
Dean	Father	He and his siblings
Sam	Mother	Mostly he
Ian	Father, mother	Mostly he and his sister
<b>Younger women</b>		
Olie	Mother (she was 12)	Her father and aunts

Teresa	Grandmother	Her mother
Tessa	Grandmother	Her parents
Stephy	Brother-in-law	Her mother and sister
Sandra	No one	
Molly	Grandmother	She cannot remember
Brenda	Partner	She and her mother
Vivienne	No one	
Meryl	No one	
Hannah	Her favourite aunt	Older female relatives
<b>Younger men</b>		
Steve	No one	
Carlos	No one	
Travis	Grandmother	Older female relatives
Tony	Mother	He was a new-born
Josh	Father	Father's female relatives
Fabrice	Grandfather, cousins	Older female relatives
Evans	Father	He was a baby

Laurent	Grandfather	Older female relatives
Neil	No one	
Daniel	Grandfather	Older relatives

Table 7 – The involvement of the older generation in the care of their elderly parents.

<b>Older women</b>	
Hendrika	She took care of her mother until her mother passed away – helped only by her youngest daughter
Loraine	Her mother remains independent (but she has said that she will take care of her mother – she is already building an extension to cater for this)
Maria	Her mother and father are still independent
Chantal	She is currently taking care of her elderly mother on her own
Olivia	Her mother is still independent but she has claimed that she will take care of her mother (and if needed leave her husband to do so)
Tania	She is currently taking care of her elderly mother on her own
Gemma	Her mother is still independent but she has noted that she will take care of her mother
Alice	She took care of both her mother and her father, with the help of her siblings
Jane	She took care of her mother on her own until her mother passed away– she even left her work to become her mother’s full-time carer
Suzy	Her mother is still independent but she says she will take care of her mother

<b>Older men</b>	
Cyril	He is currently helping in the care of his mother who has a carer
Dominic	He used to take care of his elderly father until his sister decided to take over the care of their father
John	His mother is still independent
Christophe	Both his parents are deceased – he used to take care of his terminally ill mother along with his siblings
Jaques	Both his parents are deceased
Pierre	Both his parents are deceased
Matthew	His mother is being cared for by his younger sister
Dean	He is currently helping in the care of his mother who has a carer, though his wife is more involved than he is
Sam	Both his parents are deceased
Ian	He took care of both his parents until they passed away though his wife was more involved than he was.



Table 8 – The involvement of the younger generation’s parents in the care of their grandparents and their own potential involvement.

<b>Younger women</b>	<b>The younger generation’s parents’ involvement in the care of their grandparents</b>	<b>The younger generation’s potential involvement in the care of their own parents</b>
Olie	Her younger aunt stays with and cares for her grandmother and other aunts help	She says children should take care of their elderly parents
Teresa	Her mother took care of her grandmother and she was involved	She says she will take care of her parents
Tessa	She was too young when her grandparents passed away	She is unsure though she says all children should get involved
Stephy	Her mother is currently taking care of her grandmother	She says she will take care of her mother
Sandra	Her female relatives are all involved in the care of her great-aunt (who she considers as her grandmother)	She says she has already told her husband that she will take care of her mother when her mother can no longer take care of herself
Molly	Her mother is currently taking care of her grandfather	She says she will take care of her parents

Brenda	Her mother is currently taking care of her grandmother	She says she will take care of her mother when the time comes
Vivienne	Her mother is currently taking care of her grandmother	She says she will take care of her mother when the time comes
Meryl	Her mother and aunts help in taking care of her grandmother	She says she will take care of her mother when the time comes
Hannah	No grandparents in Seychelles	She is very traditional about that and already knows she will take care of her father
<b>Younger men</b>		
Steve	His mother has institutionalised his grandmother who has dementia	There should be more elderly homes and nicer ones
Carlos	He thinks his mother will take care of his grandmother because she is a nurse	Most probably he will get a carer because  “when my mum grows old to give my mum a shower it will be strange for me”
Travis	He cannot remember	He says he should be the one taking care of his mother (though bathing her might be problematic)

Tony	His grandparents are still independent	He says he will provide care for his aunt in any way he can
Josh	His mother took care of his grandmother until she passed away	He says it is in the plans to take care of his mother though he might get a carer to help with the 'delicate issues' (changing diapers/shower)
Fabrice	His grandmother is still independent	For him it was a difficult question, most probably get a carer
Evans	His mother and aunts have taken care of his grandmother	He is not sure
Laurent	His grandmother is still independent	Maybe in a home, or carer
Neil	No grandparents	He does not know
Daniel	His grandmother is still independent	There is a stay at home sister who takes care of the elderly in his family

## **Appendix 3:**

### **Pen Portraits**

## **Older females**

### **Hendrika**

Hendrika is a 55-year-old self-employed lady. She has 30-year-old and 24-year-old daughters. She lives with her husband and youngest daughter. Her 30-year-old daughter lives close by so Hendrika considers her as still being part of the family group. Because of family commitments we could meet only during working hours and she informed me over the phone when we were discussing on a date to meet that it must be at her shop as she talks a lot, so expect to spend at least half a day with her, which ultimately, I did. She was very emotional at certain points of the interview and cried at times and was very apologetic about it. She mentioned that it was good to talk about such things, which in some way reveals that she was still feeling the pain of some things she went through. She spoke a lot about her husband's infidelity, even though that was not part of the question and the impact it had on her and how it made her stronger as a woman and a Christian. She is the youngest daughter brought up in a family of eight but has felt that her birth was planned in the sense that her reason to be on earth was to take care of her mother as she was the youngest daughter after the birth of 3 boys. She felt she was not given any support from any of her siblings and there is a sense of bitterness around that. Her mother passed away the previous year and though she was grieving there was this sense of relief that her mother was at peace. She recently became a grandmother and is very much involved in the care of her grandson.

### **Lorraine**

Lorraine is 43 years old. She is a lecturer. She grew up with a lot of family members around her, after her dad left when she was 18 months old – what she refers to as the 'Dick Withington syndrome'. She has an older sister and a younger brother. Her mother brought them up as a single mum. She was in an abusive relationship with the father of her daughter until she eventually left him and is now married to a 'wonderful man'. She is very religious, very concerned about her mum who she would call every day. She thinks that domestic violence remains a hidden taboo in Seychelles. Her daughter's dad still maintains his child, who is now 19 years old, financially. Her brother having a different dad doesn't have an impact on their relationship, though she thinks he is too muddle-coddled by their mother. She mentions dysfunctional families, and that as she is the daughter who is still around (her sister lives overseas) it is her responsibility to take care of her mother, and not her brother.

## **Maria**

Maria is 42 years old. She was brought up in a family of five. She has two brothers and two sisters. She is married and lives with her husband and children. She got pregnant when she was a teen and she has now two children from a previous relationship and one child with her husband. Her daughter is 21, her son is 19 years old son and her youngest a 10-year-old son. Her daughter was also pregnant when she was a teen as well even if Maria feels that she did the opposite of what her parents did by talking to her daughter about sex/contraception. So, she is also a grandma. She talks a lot about racism, something she personally went through with her maternal grandma. Her grandma was intervening and didn't like her because of her skin colour, and she was very attached to her paternal grandma whom she referred to as the 'pillar' of the family. Her mother had to leave the house to take care of her grandma. For her time is a factor in her not being able to see family members as often as she would have liked to. She is a person who dictates what she wants, and doesn't want to burden her mum. She is still close to her ex.

## **Chantal**

Chantal is a 42-year-old teacher who grew up without a father figure and the identity of her father remains a mystery to her. She has never asked her mother about her father because this is 'not the kind of question that you would ask someone who is older than you' according to her. So, she made sure that her children did not miss out on this. Her husband is still convalescing after a long health problem which was recently diagnosed and treated. She has a 20-year-old daughter, 11-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son. She is now the main bread winner. She received a lot of support from family members during the illness of her husband. Her family members can rely on each other but there is no meddling. She likes to stay at home and spend time with her family and she believes that 'what you reap is what you sow'. She focuses a lot on the social problems facing families and as a teacher this is what she is seeing and experiencing within the school environment. She makes sure that all her children are given particular responsibilities at home. She thinks that responding to help is something intrinsic, it is 'within us'. She feels that her older daughter needs to have a better relationship with the dad and vice versa. Her profession as a teacher has helped her as a parent, and she tends to give students what she feels they are not being given at home, and she thinks that we, as a people, are missing the *savoir faire* and the *savoir vivre*.

## **Olivia**

Olivia is 44 years old. She is a housekeeper. She grew up in a nuclear family, consisting of 8 children, 6 girls and 2 boys. There were no grandparents while she was growing up. Her family now is a nucleated one with her husband who is step dad to her older daughter who is 25 and their youngest son, who is 14. Her first relationship did not work out because her daughter's father was unfaithful. Her father died from an asthmatic attack. Her mum is still a very active woman whom she goes to visit every Sunday and her other sisters come as well. This is very important to her. This family still meets for happy occasions. She rarely sees her nieces because they are alcoholics. She argues because of life being hard for people, families do not help each other like they used to. According to her people were more corporative but now people have become more selfish. She and her siblings refuse to burden their mother with childcare duties. Her children are given gender specific chores though she thinks it should be both as she herself does everything. She is willing to leave her husband to go and care for her mother if her mother ever falls ill. She thinks male carers should not take care of elderly women and that girls are more responsible than boys. She doesn't think that adult children should rely on their parents for help at all. She is very religious and goes to church every Sunday but she is superstitious. She doesn't believe that we should rely on the state. She thinks politics play a huge role in society. She cannot rely on people who she sees as worse off than her.

## **Tania**

Tania is a 49-year-old administrative officer. She grew up in a family of nine. There wasn't really the presence of a dad - just the on and off step dads. Her own family right now reflects her mum's she admitted. She was married at one point; the husband was unemployed and alcoholic which ultimately lead to the breakdown of the marriage. She has three daughters, who are 27, 24 and 18. Her first daughter has two kids, and her partner has passed away. Her second daughter has moved out of the family home and is now living with her fiancé and young son. There is a lot of conflict between Tania and her siblings. Her dependent mother lives with her and social services had to intervene for her siblings to help with the care of her mum but to no avail. She gets some support from her kids, but she has never contemplated to put her mum in a home no matter how dire the situation is. There is a lot of ambivalence around the care of her mother, and she doesn't have a good relationship with

her siblings except for the one who is her mother's carer. She doesn't even spend special occasions with any of them, even when there was a death only a few of them turned up. Her own mother is a bit racist. She refers to colonial times and she likes to stick to routine and argues that in the past there was more unity. She is willing to use cardinal punishment to make her younger daughter listen to her.

### **Gemma**

Gemma is a 41-year-old prison officer. She has 19-year-old fraternal twins (one boy and one girl) from a previous relationship and a 9-year-old daughter with her common-law husband. The relationship with the twins' father failed because of domestic violence. Gemma grew up in a family of six consisting of 3 boys and 3 girls, and a grandmother was part of the family unit. She has never lived with a father. They all have the same mother but different dads. She knows she can rely on her relatives at any time. Her mother is the first person she needs in her life. She makes sure every day she goes to see her mother. She has never experienced not being helped when she has needed help. She believes that she is the pillar of the family. One of her cousins died of alcoholism. Even though her daughter is 19 she still needs her mum's permission to go out. When she and her husband work nights she leaves her youngest daughter with her mother. She says it is part of our culture to send our kids to our mum without needing to pay them. She listens to the advice of her mum where traditional medicines are concerned. She considers her kids as lazy though when they have their studies it is ok for them to be lazy. She is only lenient with her kids where chores are concerned. She thinks that a mother is closer to her son than her daughter. She doesn't believe that a male carer should take care of an elderly woman. She admits that she doesn't pressurize her son to do any chores.

### **Alice**

Alice is 48 years old. She is an office assistant who grew up in a family of 11, consisting of 7 boys and 4 girls. There were originally 12 of them but one died (still birth). Her parents were married for a long time and dad was the breadwinner. She has never lived with her grandparents. Now her family is made up of herself and 4 kids, 3 sons and 1 daughter. Her daughter is married and has a daughter. She refers to the father of her children as a wolf



because he is 'someone evil' who used to be a good husband and a wonderful father. She found herself and her children being left homeless after the relationship with their father failed when she discovered he was having an affair with another woman. The father did not turn up to the wedding of his own daughter, and they waited for an hour. She says that there is this belief in Seychelles that when a kid turns 18 a father cuts all communication with that child. She still respects the memory of her father even if he is dead. Alice doesn't give her children gender specific chores, her sons clean the house better than she does. She doesn't want her sons to have to rely on women to do things for them. She thinks that technology has turned us like Europeans where we sit in front of the television and there is no communication. She feels we have moved forward too fast, not just with technology but with our diet too, as she feels that our culture is being lost as the kids want to eat chips instead of rice. Her daughter is her best friend. She believes that the social problems we are having are a result of the way that the family live. She considers her granddaughter as her own child.

## **Jane**

Jane is 52 years old. She is currently in between jobs. She has a 30-year-old son, a 22-year-old daughter and 17-year-old twin sons. She was in an abusive relationship with the children's father until they eventually split up and she only had one relationship after that and now prefers to remain single. Jane grew up with her parents and is the only child of her father and has a much older half-sister. She has a nephew who grew up with her, who is older than her. Her older son works overseas. She used to take care of her mother till she passed away 5 years ago, she even left her work to do that. She had to leave the father of her children because he was an alcoholic and there was a lot of domestic violence involved. She is closer to the paternal side of her family than to her sister. She believes firmly in the concept of reciprocity. She thinks that others should think like she does. She is very generous, went as far as to pay her sister's mortgage. There is gender specific chores happening at her house. She expects her daughter and not her sons to take care of her when she is old just like she took care of her own mother though she feels that most probably it might be her older son who would take care of her. She doesn't believe that a male carer should look after a woman. Her faith is very important to her. She still goes with her 22-year-old daughter to the doctor. She believes that some people still have the mentality of depending on others.

## **Suzy**

Suzy is 41 years old. She is a secretary. She has three children from three failed relationships; a 17-year-old daughter and two young sons; the first one because of domestic violence and control, second one the father does maintain his child, as does the first, the youngest child's dad has never met his son and doesn't maintain him in any way. She thinks she is unlucky. Her parents were married for more than 50 years until the death of her father two years ago. Suzy grew up in a nuclear family of five, 3 boys, 2 girls, and she is the youngest. Her father, a carpenter was the only breadwinner, a man she considers as a role model in society. They were not well off financially, but they were a happy family. She feels that the family has broken a bit and that the death of her father has brought them even further apart. She would rather keep her problems to herself because when she shares them the siblings would then tell the others, and this has affected her as she feels there is no one to talk to and she cannot trust anyone. However, she still considers them as family. Her main support is her mum. She is close to only one aunt who she feels she can trust with her secrets. When her kids are sick she gets support from all members of the family and 'when there is sickness conflict is put to one side'.

## **Older Males**

### **Cyril**

Cyril is a doctor, who is 52 years old. He grew up in a nuclear family of 3 boys and 2 girls. He is the youngest. He considers the family he grew up in as a stable and well-structured one. The priority of the family was to do everything together and having a very good education. He considers his childhood as a happy one. Now, he has a son and a daughter but recently got a divorce though he thinks he sees his wife more now that they are divorced than they did before. He thinks that his son was affected more by the divorce than his daughter. He considers all the people who are close to him from both his parents' side as family. It's a tradition for the family to meet every Sunday at their mum's. His mum was the ruling figure of the family. The only members of family he doesn't see are his sisters who live abroad. They all contribute to the care of their mother. He thinks we have some sort of system in the country where social problems seem to be with the low economical groups. By low he means low educational values, low salary scale, low family values. He thinks most families are now reconstituted families. He feels that he can rely on anybody in his family.

### **Dominic**

Dominic is a 54-year-old self-employed man, married, with an adopted son though he does have a biological son before he met his wife. For him family is not about blood as he is closer to his adopted son than to his biological son. He was involved in the care of his father at one point but because of his work commitment it was decided eventually by his older sister that she should take over the care of his father. He initially grew up with his aunt and uncles and later was taken in by his parents. He is very religious and is very active in his local church. He recently became a grandfather but does not bring his granddaughter over considering his wife is incapable of having children and this has impacted her quite a lot. He remains in contact with his siblings who are living overseas via skype.

### **John**

John is a 45-year-old taxi operator. He has two children, a 21-year-old daughter who is away at university and a 12-year-old son. John initially grew up with aunts, uncles, grandma, his mum and siblings until his mum built her own home and then went to live with her and his siblings. He now lives with his wife and their two children. He still sees his father, and his mum on almost a daily basis. He gives his kids gendered specific chores but is trying to move away from that. He feels drugs is a huge problem because he has family members who have been affected by drugs and even died because of drugs and he has been robbed by drug addicts and one of his family member was murdered. He considers children as an asset. He believes in a trial marriage before jumping into the real deal. He doesn't believe in putting the elderly into a home unless under extreme circumstances like blindness.

### **Christophe**

Christophe is a 43-year-old journalist. His parents divorced when he was only 13 months old so he grew with his mum and his siblings, except for the eldest who was by then an adult. There were 7 of them, 6 boys and 1 girl. He is the youngest. His parents divorced because of infidelity on the part of his dad. His mother died when he was quite a young adult and during her illness all the family members supported their mother and each other as well. He and his brothers try to meet at least once each month. He already has a 20-year-old daughter from a previous relationship and doesn't plan to have any more kids with his current partner.

He thinks his family is not as close as he would have liked them to be. His parents' divorce affected his relationship with his dad. He holds his father responsible for not ensuring that they had a relationship. He thinks that this lack of family structure and support was a reason why his marriage didn't work out. Even if the marriage didn't work out he made sure because of his experience of not having a dad around that he was there for his daughter. He thinks there are two Seychelles. One which is really hit by drugs and one which is where the people have no idea this is happening. He thinks we still have racial issues. He feels children are losing out because parents need to do two jobs. For him the only reason which he finds as acceptable to refuse to provide help to a sick relative or an elderly is if he is not physically present and is out of the country. He doesn't think that giving advice is his forte, and he is not comfortable doing it.

### **Jaques**

Jaques is a 55-year-old director. He grew up in a family of five, 2 girls and 3 boys. He is married and has a son and daughter. Both of his kids are at university. His mother passed away last year. He feels that her passing has left a huge gap in his life. He thinks that death tends to unite families, even if you are crossed at each other. His daughter tends to turn to him for guidance unless it is something related to women's issues. He thinks that parent should have a close relationship with their children. He tends to wait for help to be offered rather than ask for it. He thinks that alcohol is becoming a huge problem because everywhere people are drinking and people 'do not give a damn' that underage people should not be drinking. He is very religious and attend church every Sunday where he thinks he can find some solace. He did not give his kids gender specific chores, they both did a bit of everything. He has decided not to use corporal punishment because he used to be whacked by his dad but that didn't do him any good. He had to marry his wife because she was pregnant. Her parents were very religious. He doesn't think that grown-up children should rely on their parents for help, it should be the other way around. He will only help his adult children so that they can help themselves and only if they have a proper reason to why they need help. He argues that you should not rely on the state but you can be assisted by it. For him cuddles and hugs are the most important when bringing children up. He is not looking forward to his kids leaving the house for good and he misses having them around.

## **Pierre**

Pierre is an education officer. He is a 54-year-old very straight-talking man who wanted to express himself in the mother tongue, so the interview took place in creole, in his office. He has an adopted son who is 22. He also has a 21-year-old daughter, and 10-year-old son who are his biological children. He and his wife adopted because they were not able to have children after trying for ten years. The moment they adopted the disabled boy his wife became pregnant and even if they were told that they could give the baby back they refused. Pierre grew up in a family where there were 7 children, 4 boys and 3 girls, but unfortunately his mother died when he was 4 and as he was the youngest he went to live with his grandparents and got to visit his siblings over the weekend. His father was hence single and he was at an age where his dad was unable to take care of him. The family was dispersed as some of his brothers went to live with the other grandma. He sees this as having an effect in the sense that he and his siblings just do not meet up and he states that there are two reasons for this, one their mother died, and they were all separated and two their father remarried which many did not accept. He considers himself to have a lot of families, not just those who are related to him by blood. He admits that he spoils his kids a bit when they were growing up, not really giving them much chores. He is very religious and believes that Seychellois have lost a lot of their values. He thinks people are becoming less compassionate, there is temptation, and people have started to lose the culture of the family.

## **Matthew**

Matthew is a 53-year-old man. He works in maintenance and says he uses his hands a lot. He has two daughters, one 23 and the other 17 years old. He is a single father to the girls who lost their mother when the younger daughter was 4 years old. He wanted some of the things he said to be known so that people may know how fathers, single fathers do not fare well in our society. He says that he did not receive any support when he was bringing the girls up and had to rely on family members. He was told that since he is a man he could work and provide for his children. He agrees with this but adds on that he was a simple labourer and what he was earning was not sufficient to cater for the needs of his children. The interview took place in a private office and in creole. Matthew did use some old creole terms which I had to get help from older people to translate. He grew up in a family of 11, and life was hard for them. He stopped going to school when he was 12 to start work as they were

very poor. There was no father, like he says, 'father has just planted his seeds and then left'. They did not have the same dad as well. However, he knew his dad and took care of him even if his dad didn't provide for him. He refuses to bring any of his partners at home to his daughters as he worries that they might clash.

### **Dean**

Dean is a 55-year-old self-employed business man who is married. He grew up in a nuclear family with his parents and two brothers and two sisters. He is the first-born son but his sisters are older than him. He has a daughter who is 29 years old and a son who is 21 years old as well as two stepchildren: 38-year-old stepson and 34-year-old stepdaughter, who he considers as his own children as he knew them since they were small kids. He is very much involved in the care of his ailing mother who he must visit every Sunday. His father passed away 15 years ago, and his death affected his mother deeply. He feels that there should be a professional caring system in place and that not everyone could be a carer. As he is the first-born son he is the one who is responsible of his parents' assets and finances and he is the one who has to decide on such matters. He is very critical of the current government which he considers as too partisan.

### **Sam**

Sam is a 54-year-old divorcee. He grew up with his mother and siblings after his father abandoned them when he was very young. His mother died when he was 18 years old. He divorced from his wife four years ago, after she was unfaithful to him when he was ill. He considers his divorce as a bitter one and says he has nothing to do with the ex-wife and he feels that his divorce has scarred him in the sense that since the divorce he has not been in a relationship and chooses to remain single. His son is 20 years old and he comes over to his place every weekend. He is sad that his son will be leaving for university soon but he is happy that at least the boy would be away from his mother and learn to become independent. He doesn't feel that he has received much support from his relatives and he found it difficult to answer some of the questions which has to do with 'the ways that relatives support each other'. He tended to often refer to his divorce during the interview.

## **Ian**

Ian is a 45-year-old administrator. He grew up with his mother and sister and his father would visit often as he worked on the outer islands. He is married and lives with his wife and their 23-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son. He is very much involved in his church and feels that his religious group is part of his family. He was involved in the care of his elderly mother until she passed away two years ago, though he admits that his wife provided certain care which he couldn't provide himself. He feels that the government should provide more help so that children can better take care of their elderly parents themselves but that this is only possible with the additional help from the government. He has a sister, but she lives overseas. Even though his daughter is 23, he thinks that she should still be asking for his permission before leaving the house because she still lives under his roof.

## **Young Females**

### **Olie**

Olie is a prospective medical student. She is 19 years old and lost her mother to cancer 6 years ago. She is currently living with her father as she has taken a gap year before she leaves for her studies to become an oncologist. Her father recently started a new relationship and her step mother gave birth to her half-sister who is now 3 months old. She thinks that when she goes away to university the one thing that does trouble her is not being there when her sister grows up. She is used with her father not being around as he often goes away on business trips which has made her very independent. She has a different view of family life compared to most of her peers as she often spends significant time by herself. She still visits her mum's grave and this brings her some solace.

### **Teresa**

Teresa is a 24-year-old project manager residing in the North of Mahé. She grew up with her parents, who are married, her maternal grandmother and her older sister. Her grandmother passed away last year. She was very much involved in the care of the grandmother though she was annoyed that her aunts and uncles were not too active in the care of their mother and all the responsibilities fell on her and her mother. She is not very close to her father who had

an affair a couple of years ago. She knew about the affair because she has seen her father on many occasions with the other woman. Her parents managed to save their marriage but according to her this has already done a lot of damage especially all the bickering and fights and she grew tired of it all. She is very protective of her mother though she feels that her mother spends too much time caring for others and less time taking care of herself. Her sister recently gave birth and she feels that becoming a grandfather has changed her father significantly.

### **Tessa**

Tessa is a 27-year-old young woman from the East of Mahé. She has four brothers. Her parents are married. She is currently cohabiting with her partner and their baby daughter as well as her partner's parents. She admits that she is still waiting for the engagement ring. Her daughter is disabled though she is making her utmost best for the little girl to have as 'normal' a life as possible. She says she is a very positive person and with having a child with special needs she has to be positive. She is very proud of her daughter's progress and even showed me some photos of the little girl. She gets annoyed when people feel sorry for her and her child and when people would handle her child with 'special care' as she wants her child to be treated just like other children. Both her mother and mother-in-law are involved in the care of the child as there is no nursery capable of taking her in because of her special needs.

### **Stephy**

Stephy is a 23-year-old human resource officer. She grew up with her mother, two sisters and her grandmother. She recently moved out of the house that she grew up in as she felt that her mother was getting too involved in the upbringing of her young son who she wanted to bring up in her own way. She is very close to her mother though and would spend significant time during the weekend with her mother and sisters. She is cohabiting with her fiancé, the father of her two-year-old son. She does not get along with her mother-in-law who still hopes that her son would get back with his previous girlfriend. Stephy worries over her mother's health and is very annoyed that her aunts and uncles do not get involved in the care of their mother and her mother is the only one who has to do it so much so that she has



not been on a proper holiday for a long time. Stephy knows her father but doesn't have a relationship with him as she feels that he doesn't want to have one with her so she sees no point in trying to work on that particular relationship.

### **Sandra**

Sandra is a 24-year-old mature student who is a teacher trainee. She grew up with her mother, sisters, her mother's aunt and cousins. At one point, she lived with a step-father who was abusive towards her and when her mother found out the mother separated from him and they went back to live with the aunt. She now lives with her husband and her young son. Her husband is not Seychellois and there seems to be at times some cultural conflicts especially when her husband wants her to be submissive, though Sandra quips that 'Seychellois women are not submissive'. She gets on well with her in-laws and looks forward to their yearly visit. She relies a lot on her mother to help her with the care of her son though she rejects her mother's 'medical advice' where traditional medicines are concerned and would prefer taking the boy to the doctor for professional advice. She quips that she would get annoyed when her mother, would, for example tell her to put a thread on her baby's forehead when he hiccups so as to stop the hiccupping! One of her sisters is an alcoholic who recently was hospitalised after the sister's boyfriend threw hot water on her and she ended up with secondary burns. She admits that her marriage works because every fortnight she would spend the weekend at her mother's house. She doesn't believe in any religious organisations and has not baptised her son yet, something her mother is not happy about.

### **Molly**

Molly lives with her parents who are married and an elder brother and her maternal grandfather. She believes that her brother is her mother's favourite child because her mother lets him get away with almost anything and he doesn't seem to do a lot of chores compared to her. She is single after being in a difficult relationship which she identified as a love triangle. She identifies her mother as the head of the household and her father as being the more emotional one. She believes that teenagers nowadays get away with things. She went away to university but missed her family so much she couldn't cope and came back home.

## **Brenda**

Brenda is a 27-year-old social worker residing in the North of Mahé. She has two children, a 10-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter. She lives with her mother, her children, her grandmother and younger sister. She has two younger sisters, but one has moved out of the family home where they all grew up in. She did not grow up with her father nor did her sisters, though at one point her mother was married to her youngest sister's father but because of alcoholism and domestic violence the relationship did not last long. She feels closer to her adopted father than her biological father. Her children's father died tragically two years ago, two months before the birth of their daughter. She cried when she spoke about the tragedy and how she is still trying to move on. She is close to her sisters and her mother but does not get along with her grandmother and openly admits that she does not like her. She feels annoyed that her mother is the only one who has to take care of her grandmother, and in the absence of her mother this responsibility falls on her and her sisters, and yet her grandmother has eight other children. She remains close to her partner's parents and they are very much involved in the life of her children, especially as her deceased partner was an only child.

## **Vivienne**

Vivienne is a 24-year-old trainee draft woman. She is married and has two young children. She says she is very close to her mother who she would call all the time to ask for advice. Her little boy stays with her mother during weekdays as her mother lives close to his nursery. She grew up with her mother, grandmother, an older brother and an older sister. She doesn't know her biological father and has a stepfather since she was a baby. Her answers were straight forward and no matter how much I probed she did not disclose much.

## **Meryl**

Meryl is a 27-year-old young woman residing in the West of Mahé. She is a primary school teacher. She recently got engaged to her daughter's stepfather who she identifies as someone who is more of a father to her daughter than the child's biological father is. Her mother gave birth to her when she was 14 so she ended up growing up with her grandmother who she is very close to and according to her, the only person who can ask her to do certain things. She

has two sisters and her daughter is two years old. She feels that being a teacher does not only involve teaching kids but acting as their parents at times as many parents seem to think that teachers should be the ones teaching their kids values that she feels should be taught within the home. She had an on and off relationship with the father of her daughter but finally ended the relationship after she realised that he was not serious and was in another relationship. The child's father does not see his daughter, but he provides for her financially.

### **Hannah**

Hannah is a 24-year-old young woman who is currently studying and working in the tourism industry. She is an only child who lives with her father who remains single after divorcing her mother when Hannah was 10. Hannah would have loved to live with her mother, who she is very close to but because her mother lives in another country and she did try to live there for two years, she now has no choice but to live with her father who she is not close to. This is because she loves her birth country too much. So according to her, she is the one who raised herself. She is not close to her maternal aunts because they have always been mean to her mother, except for one, who sadly passed away when she was 15 years old. Hannah cried when she spoke about her aunt, the aunt who pushed her mother to take up a career in medicine considering her mum was a housewife with little skills. She considers herself a feminist and gets annoyed over sexist remarks. She identifies herself as bi-curious.

### **Young males**

#### **Steve**

Steve is a 26-year-old young man who lives in the north of Mahé with his mother. His older brother has moved out of the family home and his sister lives close by with her partner and young son. His parents are divorced, and he thinks it has to do with his father's infidelity. He sees his father every day. He has been in a relationship with his girlfriend for the past three years, they even share matching rings. His maternal grandmother lives in a home and he is very defensive as to why this decision was taken by his mother and her siblings.

### **Carlos**

Carlos is a 20-year-old student who comes from the East of Mahé. He is single. He lives with his mother. His parents separated when he was younger due to his father's infidelity. He spoke about the infidelity a couple of times and how it affected him and his relationship with his father who he does not consider as 'family'. He has a sister who lives with the dad and he does not consider her as 'family' as well. He is very close to his mother and dislikes the way his maternal grandmother treats his mother. His grandmother often says that his mother should have 'carried her cross' and stayed with his father even if the man was unfaithful.

### **Travis**

Travis is a 26-year-old police officer who comes from the South of Mahé. He lives with his mother and step-father and never really knew his father. He has a younger sister, but she doesn't live with him and his mother and step-father. She lives with her foster mother. He is in a relationship though he doesn't live with the girlfriend. He feels he is too young to settle down. He openly admits that he will take care of his mother when she becomes too old to take care of herself as he refuses to have her put in a home. He makes sure that he contributes financially to the home expenses but openly admits that he is lazy and would rarely take up any chores though he does his laundry himself and irons his uniform himself.

### **Tony**

Tony is a 24-year-old assistant statistician. He comes from the west of Mahé. He lives with his maternal grandparents and aunts and uncles, though he has an aunt who he identifies as his 'mother'. His mother died soon after giving birth to him and he feels honoured that she chose him over herself and makes sure that he enjoys life in her memory. He is single though admits he is still smitten with his previous girlfriend. He sees his father occasionally but doesn't really look forward to those meetings as his father tends to ask him for money or tells him about his big 'fruitless plans'. He has two half-sisters and two half-brothers, and he is only close to one of them. He identifies this year as a special one as he is 24, the age his mother was when she passed away. He is a devout catholic.

## **Josh**

Josh is a 29-year-old lecturer. He is an only child and has a young son. He considers himself as single and available. He recently separated from the mother of his son after finding out that she was being unfaithful to him. He currently lives with his mother and stepfather. He did not grow up with his father, but he knew him. His father passed away a couple of years ago, under suspicious circumstances. He has a couple of half siblings and has met some of them. He is very close to his small son and would have him over at his place every weekend and during school holidays. He says that considering he grew up not knowing his father he refuses to let his son go through the same experiences that he did. He smokes, something he picked up whilst at university and has been trying hard to quit for quite a while for the sake of his son.

## **Fabrice**

Fabrice is a 19-year-old law student who comes from central Mahé. He has a twin sister and a younger sister who is 9 years old. He lives with his mother, stepfather and sisters. He knows who his father is but rarely sees him. He is close to two of his uncles, who are twins and look up to them as role models. He admits that he bickers a lot with his twin sister and tends to get along more with the youngest sister who 'makes his bed'. He identifies himself as being rather lazy but feels that because of his studies he cannot get too involved in housework.

## **Evans**

Evans is a 22-year-old young man who works as a business development officer. He grew up with his mother and grandmother. His father passed away when he was two weeks old. He didn't know much about his father as his mother did not let him visit his paternal relatives when he was growing up but now that he is an adult he has chosen to meet them and spend some time with them and get to know more about his father. He is an only child. His mother has had only two serious relationships that he could think of and he admits that he was not keen on any of them. He is married and has two young children. He feels bitter that he missed out on his son's early days because of the intervention of his wife's mother. He now gets along with his in-laws and feels that there must be forgiveness in order for them to move forward.

## **Laurent**

Laurent is a 23-year-old young man who comes from the North of Mahé. He is currently cohabiting with his girlfriend. He grew up in an extended family, but his father was not present whilst he and his younger brother were growing up. He does know his father and would meet him at times. He is a very committed sportsman and because of his love for his sport he has given up drinking alcohol and is working on his fitness level. He was very close to his maternal grandfather and when he died, the death had a huge impact on him. According to him his grandfather was his father figure and they would spend a lot of time together, for example, they shared the same passion for the same kind of sport and his grandfather who was a coach would take him to all the games. He is very close to his mother and would at times cook dinner for her and take it over to her house as he knows she is busy and not a very good cook - according to him. He loves cooking and would rarely let his girlfriend cooks.

## **Neil**

Neil is a 21-year-old young man who comes from the north of Mahé. He is a student at the university of Seychelles. He currently lives with his mother, 35-year-old brother and 18-year-old sister. Most of his maternal relatives live close by to one another. His father was recently incarcerated because of drug trafficking. His brother is currently a drug addict. He is openly annoyed about the fact that his mother has prepared him to be an independent young man by showing him for example how to do his laundry, which he considers as 'girly chores' and yet his sister cannot use any garden tools. He is annoyed about this double standard. He admires his father to the extent that he followed his dad into the religious organisation that he was into until he realised that it was not for him and left. He currently identifies himself as an atheist. He considers his family as a clan and even though he knew about his father's drug trafficking activities he admits that not once did he consider turning his father in. He has a girlfriend, but they do not live together.

## **Daniel**

Daniel is a 20-year-old analyst programmer. He lives with his mother, her boyfriend and his younger brother in the south of Mahé. He doesn't get along with his step-father who he

considers as a lazy person. His parents are divorced and when they finally divorced he was happy about this because of all the domestic violence. He still sees his father and his paternal relatives. His mother is still close to his paternal aunts and uncles. He doesn't believe in love and has not been any serious relationships and prefer to remain single. He identifies himself as a catholic and at times practices his religion.

## **Appendix 4:**

### **Ethical Approval Form**



Research and Enterprise Services, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, UK

Telephone: + 44 (0)1782 734466 Fax: + 44 (0)1782 733740

**RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES**

21st January 2015

Farida Henriette

Social Sciences RI

Keele University

Dear Farida,

**Re: Family responsibilities in the Seychelles**

Thank you for submitting your application for review. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel. The following documents have been reviewed and approved by the panel as follows:

Document Version Date

Summary Proposal 2 19/01/2015

Information Sheet 2 19/01/2015

Consent Form 1 10/12/2014

Interview Topic Guide 2 19/01/2015

Vignettes 1 10/12/2014

Information Letter 1 19/01/2015

Advert SBC 1 19/01/2015

Police Character Certificate 1 19/01/2015

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application, you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via the ERP administrator at [uso.erps@keele.ac.uk](mailto:uso.erps@keele.ac.uk) stating ERP1 in the subject line of the email.

If there are any other amendments to your study you must submit an 'application to amend study' form to the ERP administrator stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail. This form is available via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via the ERP administrator on [uso.erps@keele.ac.uk](mailto:uso.erps@keele.ac.uk) stating ERP1 in the subject line of the e-mail.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Jackie Waterfield**

**Chair – Ethical Review Panel**

CC RI Manager

## **Appendix 5:**

### **Ethics summary document**

## **Summary document**

The aim of this project is to establish how family responsibilities, duties, commitments and obligations are understood and experienced in the Seychelles and how this varies for different generations. I wish to look at the different understandings of family obligations between generations.

### **Research aims and objectives:**

- To explore what people in the Seychelles identify as appropriate family responsibilities, duties and obligations.
- To examine how these obligations are negotiated within family relationships.
- To examine how commitments are developed and displayed by men and women and by younger and older adults.

I am interested in the main themes of family responsibility, obligations, commitments and duty. It is important to note that there is very little research on the sociology of the Seychelles and even less on the family.

### **The research process:**

I will recruit a sample of younger and older adults. The younger sample will comprise of independent youth aged 16 to 30, who have at least one parent still alive. Independent youth will be defined as persons aged over 16 and less than 30 (which is recognised as the upper age limit for youth in the Seychelles) who are not engaged in compulsory education. This group might be living with parents or outside of the parental home and may have their own children. The older sample will comprise of parents and they have adult children below the age of 30. This group must have at least one child who is non-dependent. The cut off age for young adults is 30 as this is the age considered in the Seychelles where one is still identified as a youth. The sample will comprise of twenty individuals in each group, ending up with forty individuals in total.

The sample will be recruited with the help of the media. In the Seychelles, the media is usually the main way of getting access to people interested in taking part in research projects. I will contact the marketing director of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC)

before my departure to prepare an advert which will be advertised upon my arrival. This advert will be advertised before the local creole 8 o'clock news, which is watched by most Seychellois. I will have a phone number which will be used only for the purpose of the research as this is the main method of contact. In order to get access to those who might not respond to the media, access will be achieved through gatekeepers and in this case here this can be post-secondary school principals who might grant me access to parents. A post-secondary school is the British equivalent of a college, and the student population mostly comprises of 17 to 21-year olds and it is not compulsory. A principal is the British equivalent of head-teacher. I will also be in contact with the administrator of a Facebook page, known as 'Gossip Corner' which currently has more than fifteen thousand members. I will ask him if he can pin a post on the page, which will hopefully grab the attention of prospective participants. Those interested will be given an email address which will be used for the purpose of the research along with the phone number. Those who are interested in taking part will not have their names revealed on the page and hence their confidentiality will be protected. Community centres will also be visited to get access to adults there. I will also attempt to get access to church goers.

The content of interviews will focus principally upon people's own families. Interviews will discuss everyday family practices. Participants will be asked to talk about relationships in their own families, concentrating upon examples of support and assistance which they and others have experienced. Interviews will last between 1 to 2 hours. The interviews will be carried out in the local language of Creole, which will then be fully translated by me. If any participants wish for the interview to be carried out in English this will be the case. Vignettes will also be used to uncover cultural and social norms.

Individuals will be given the information sheet and consent will be sought. Fieldwork will take place from February 2015 till February 2016. Participants will let the researcher know at what time of the day (after 8 am and before 6pm) and day of the week they wish to be interviewed. Location will be agreed by participant and researcher upon initial contact with the researcher. Location may be at the participant's home, or at the community centre or at an office at a school, or at the national library at an allocated office.

Only the researcher and her supervisors, Dr Emma Head and Professor Clare Holdsworth will have access to the data collected. The supervisors will get access only to translated and transcribed data. Data will be secured on a password protected computer. All data will be

stored in line with Keele University's Data Protection Policy. Specially, no personal information will be disclosed to unauthorized recipients and all personal information will be destroyed on completion of the project. I have read and understood Keele University's lone worker policy and I will also take into account my own safety following guidelines for those working overseas.

### **Anonymity**

Participation in the research will be anonymous. In order to protect the anonymity of individuals, pseudonyms will be used for all participants. All personal data will be anonymised before publication. In order to protect the anonymity of any individual who may have certain characteristics that can be easily identified, the individual's pseudonym will be changed and the district and island he or she comes from will be changed as well. Voice recordings will be removed from the audio recorder and stored on a password protected file on the researcher's personal computer and then on the university's computer. Voice recordings will be deleted after translation and transcription. Only the researcher will get access to the voice recordings. Data will be anonymised before dissemination.

### **Confidentiality**

Participants will be made aware that personal data will be treated as confidential. In order to ensure this, personal data gathered during interviews will be anonymised before publication and used only for the purpose of the research and for future publications, if they agree to it. Participants will be given different pseudonyms and any identifying details will be changed before the data is analysed. Additional measures to preserve anonymity will be taken such as by changing characteristics or disclosed events. I am not aiming to recruit participants from the same family but if this happens, members from the same family will be interviewed separately and potentially disclosed information will be removed from the interview transcripts.

## **Consent**

Participants wishing to take part will be informed that participation is voluntary and verbal consent will be requested, which will be recorded. In the Seychelles, it is quite common for people to associate written consent forms with bureaucracy and tend to treat them with substantial scepticism, which is why verbal consent is preferred. Personal communication with Dr. Liam Campling, lecturer at Queen Mary University of London, who has carried out research in the Seychelles, has advised that consent is best obtained verbally. Verbal consent will be gained before the interview. I will go through all the points on the consent form with the participants at the beginning of the interviews. Consents will be recorded and each consent will be stored in a separate audio file.

## **Appendix 6:**

### **Information sheet**

## **Information sheet**

**Title of Project:** Family responsibilities in the Seychelles

**Name and contact details of researcher:** Farida G Henriette, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, UK email- [f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk](mailto:f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk), 2525884

**Aims of the research:** The focus of this project is to discuss family life in the Seychelles. It will consider family relationships between adults and how adults experience family life. For example, who do we consider as our family, who can we rely on? It will explore what people in the Seychelles identify as appropriate family responsibilities, duties and obligations.

**Invitation:** You are being invited to consider taking part in this research. It is being undertaken by Farida Henriette, citizen of Seychelles and PhD student at Keele University, UK. Please read this information carefully to ensure that you understand what the research involves. For any other additional questions or clarification do not hesitate to contact Farida.

### **Why have you been chosen:**

You have been chosen because *either*

you are a member of a family who is a young independent person aged 16 to 30 who is not engaged in compulsory education and who has at least one parent still alive;

*OR*

you are a member of a family who is a parent, and you have adult children below the age of 30, with at least one child who is non-dependent, (non-dependent means that this child is not engaged in compulsory education).

**Do you have to take part:** You do not have to take part in this research. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

**What will happen if you take part:** If you do decide to participate you will be invited to take part in an interview with Farida at a location of your choice.

**If you do take part, what do you have to do:** If you decide to take part you will be take part in an interview. The interview is a form of conversation and we will discuss everyday family life. The length of the interview will be between 1 to 2 hours.



**What are the benefits (if any) of taking part:** You will have the opportunity to talk about your family. Your contribution to the research will be valuable.

**What are the risks (if any) of taking part:** It is not anticipated that there will be any risks.

**How will the information about you be used:** With your permission a recording will be made of the interview. This recording will be typed up for analysis. The data will be used in Farida's PhD thesis and future publications. All personal information such as name, address will be removed or changed so that you will not be identified.

**Who will have access to information about you:** Only Farida and her supervisors, Dr Emma Head and Prof. Clare Holdsworth (who are lecturers in UK) will have access to the data collected. The interview data will be stored on a password protected computer. All data will be stored in line with Keele University's Data Protection Policy.

**What if there is a problem:** If you have any concerns about any aspect of this research kindly contact Farida who will try to answer any questions that you may have. You can contact her on this phone number: 2525884. If you do not want to approach Farida you can contact the supervisor on the details provided below.

**Name and contact details of supervisor:** Dr Emma Head, Lecturer in Sociology, School of Sociology and Criminology, Chancellor's Building, Keele University ST5 5BG, UK  
email- [e.l.head@keele.ac.uk](mailto:e.l.head@keele.ac.uk);  
Phone +44 (0) 1782733898

If you are still unhappy with any aspect of the study or wish to make a complaint, please write to Nicola Leighton who is the Universities contact for this type of issue at:

Nicola Leighton, Research Governance Officer, Research and Enterprise Services, Dorothy Hodgkin Building,  
Keele University  
ST5 5BG  
UK  
Email: [n.leighton@keele.ac.uk](mailto:n.leighton@keele.ac.uk)  
Telephone: +44 (0)1782 733306

## **Appendix 7:**

### **Consent Form (English Version)**

## **Consent form (Verbal)**

**Title of project:** Family responsibilities in the Seychelles.

**Name and contact details of researcher:** Farida G Henriette, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, UK email- [f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk](mailto:f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk), 2525884

Farida will read all these statements with you. Any that you do not understand Farida will clarify for you. Please give your answer to each question. Farida will give you time to answer each question. All of this will be audio-recorded.

1. Do you confirm that you have read the information sheet associated with the study named above and have had the opportunity to ask questions?
2. Do you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons?
3. Do you agree to take part in this study?
4. Do you agree to your interview being audio recorded?
5. Do you understand that the data collected about you for the purposes of this study will be anonymised before being used within the researchers' project and in any research publications?
6. Do you agree that your quotes can be used?

## **Appendix 8:**

### **Interview Guide (English Version)**

## **Interview Guide: Family responsibilities in the Seychelles**

### **Themes**

Family responsibility, Duty, Obligation, Commitment (and reciprocity)

#### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

- Introduce self, the study and its aims
- Brief discussion of ethical issues, that is anonymity and assurance of confidentiality
- Permission to tape record

#### **2. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:**

- Tell me about your family, where you grew up and the family structure.
- Who is considered as your family? And why?
- Are you close?
- How often do you see members of your family?
- Who don't you see? Why?

#### **3. WHO HELPS WHO:**

- Can you discuss a range of the ways in which your relatives assist each other?
- Let us focus on one particular event (that you just discussed). Can you tell me more on what kind of support that was given on that event? Who got involved?
- Was there any one who took control? (Probe for yes by asking who, and is this typical)
- What do you think makes family members respond when help is asked? (and not)
- Do you ask for help which you need, or do you wait for it to be offered? Why?
- What makes it acceptable to ask for help? And unacceptable?
- What will make you turn to a particular family member? (Probe- which family member)

#### **4. HOW IS THE FAMILY CHANGING OVER TIME**

## OWN FAMILY

- In what ways would you say your family is similar to others in the Seychelles?
- In what ways would you say your family is different from other in the Seychelles?
- What particular jobs do boys/girls do in your family? Why do they do these particular jobs? Do you consider this as the norm?
- In times of need who would you much rather turn to? Why?
- Would you say there is any one particular member you rely on? Why?

## OTHER FAMILIES/WIDER ATTITUDES

- How do you think families in the Seychelles have changed over the past ten years?
- Why have these changes taken place?
- How do you personally feel about such changes?
- Who do you think should look after the elderly and what should they do?
- Should relatives be the first line of assistance?
- Most carers in Seychelles are women. Do you think men can also become carers of the elderly/the sick? Why?
- In what ways would you think it acceptable for grown-up children to rely on their parents for help?

## Other questions that might be discussed depending on participants' discussion of a particular situation

- What situations do you think can be considered as acceptable to refuse to provide personal help to a sick relative? Are there any which you think are unacceptable?
- And in the case of an elderly relative?
- In what ways would you say your religious faith has an effect on how you take your responsibilities/duties towards your family member?
- What situations do you think it is alright to borrow money from family? Should there be an upper limit on the amount borrowed?

## **Appendix 9:**

### **Facebook Post**

### **Facebook post**

A Seychellois PhD student is carrying out a research about family responsibilities in the Seychelles. This research will consider family relationships between adults and how adults experience family life. For example, who do we consider as members of our family, who can we rely on and who we care for?

If you are a young person aged 16 to 30 who is not engaged in compulsory education and who has at least one parent still alive;

*OR*

You are a parent, and you have adult children below the age of 30,  
then, you are invited to take part in this research.

Participation is completely voluntary.

Those interested in taking part contact Farida on 2525884 or email her on this address  
f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk.

Do NOT at any point leave any of your personal details in the comment box.  
Thank you.



## **Appendix 10:**

### **Information letter for principals**

## **Information letter for principals**

Farida G Henriette  
Student ID 12020079  
Keele University  
Staffordshire  
ST5 5BG  
United Kingdom

The Principal,  
School of Advanced Level Studies  
Anse Royale  
Mahe Seychelles  
Date

Dear Sir,

### **RE: Getting access to parents**

My name is Farida Henriette. I am currently a PhD student reading Sociology at the University of Keele. I am a citizen of the Seychelles. I am contacting you to see if you can make it possible for me to get access to parents. One of my sample groups consists of parents who have adult children below the age of 30, with at least one child who is non-dependent, (non-dependent means that this child is not engaged in compulsory education). As your institution is not one involved in compulsory education there will be students who are non-dependent.

The title of my project is “Family responsibilities in the Seychelles”. The focus of this project is to discuss family life in the Seychelles. It will consider family relationships between adults and how adults experience family life. For example, who do we consider as our family, who can we rely on? It will explore what people in the Seychelles identify as appropriate family responsibilities, duties and obligations.

Is it possible for you to identify such students and/or their parents and give them my contact details if they are interested to take part in this research? Kindly inform them that participation is voluntary.

My contact number is 2525884 or you can email me on [f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk](mailto:f.g.henriette@keele.ac.uk).

For any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.

I thank you for your valuable time and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Farida Henriette